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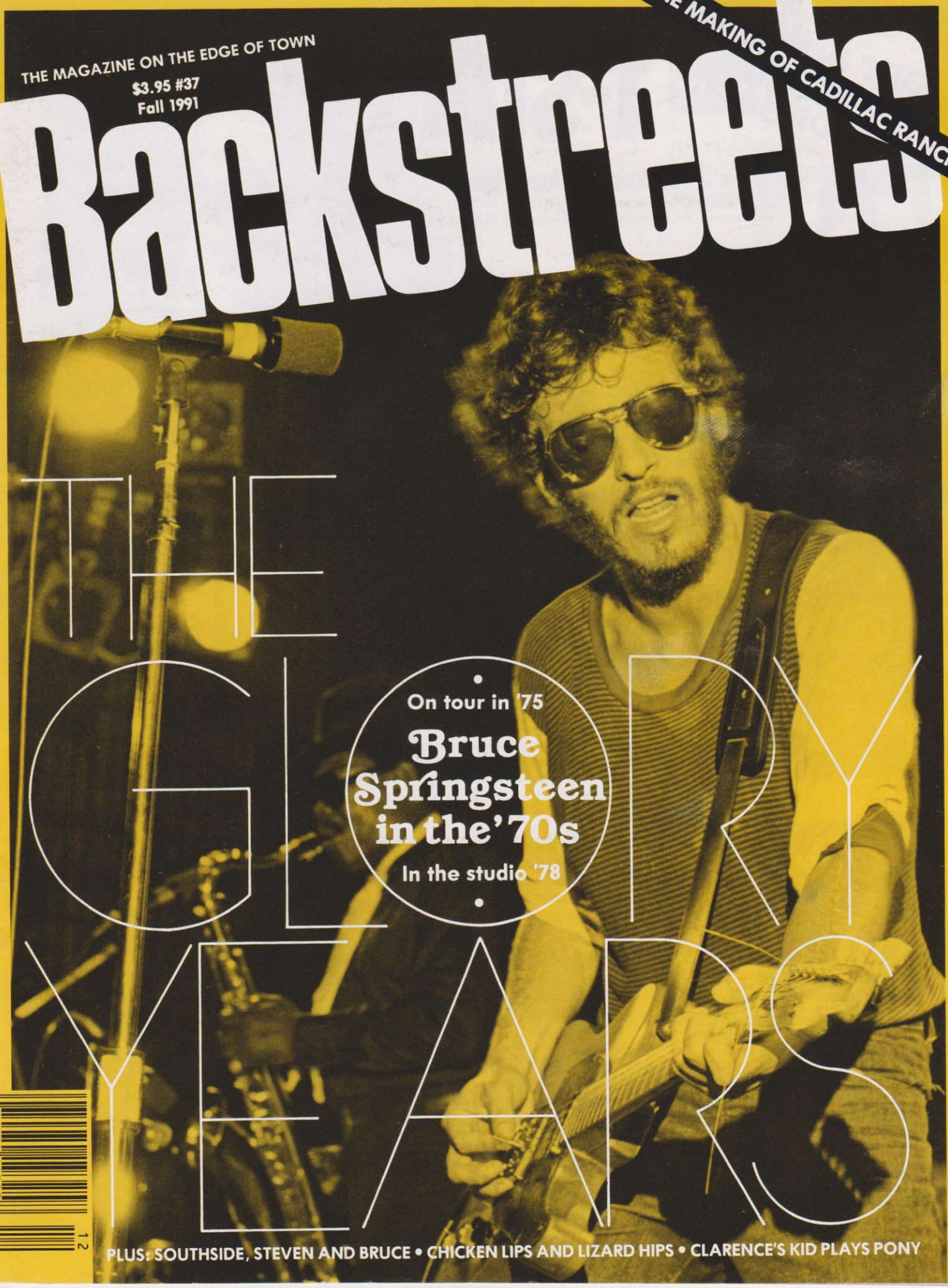
Fall 1991

Backstreets

THE MAKING OF CADILLAC RANCH



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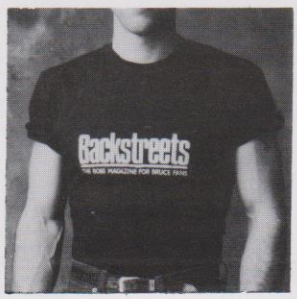

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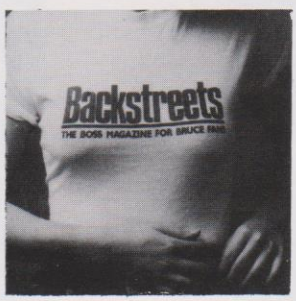

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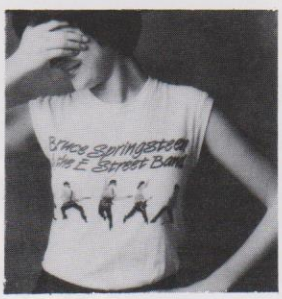

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Backstreets

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Backstreets (ISSN 0746-990X) is published quarterly by Backstreets Publishing Inc., PO Box 51225, Seattle, WA 98115, USA with offices at 2028 5th Avenue, Seattle, WA. Please address **all** correspondence to *Backstreets,* PO Box 51225, Seattle, WA 98115. FAX (206) 728-8827. Subscriptions are available for $15 a year or $25 for two years in the US and Canada (payment must be in US funds only), or for overseas airmail, rates are $20 a year or $35 for two years (again only in US funds). All contents are copyright © 1991, Backstreets Publishing Inc. Please include a self addressed, stamped envelope with **any** inquiries. Second class postage paid at Seattle, Washington, and at additional mailing offices.
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Vol. 10, No. 1
Fall 1991
Maybe-next-year issue

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Princeton, NJ, October 1974
Photo by Phil Ceccola

Off the Wall

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN
Cheers, Long Beach, NJ
August 14, 1991
Photo by Debra L. Rothenberg

LETTERS

ONE OF US MUST KNOW

Dear Editor:

Backstreets is a wonderful fanzine and I look forward to receiving it all the time. The one complaint that I have is so minor that I have held off writing this letter for months. It was Erik Flannigan's article "The Waiting" which finally convinced me to write.

Bruce Springsteen has been compared to Bob Dylan since the beginning — and I still cannot figure out why. Springsteen has covered multiple Dylan songs and that is just fine. But I have noticed a trend in *Backstreets* that I do no appreciate. Please stop bringing up Bob Dylan in your magazine. What is the point of praising Dylan as a 1960's legend, philosophizing about Dylan songs, and reviewing his albums in a magazine devoted exclusively to Bruce Springsteen and the New Jersey Shore music scene? This might come as quite a shock to you, but I don't care for Dylan's music at all. If I did, I'm sure there is a Dylan fan club I could subscribe to.

However, as long as you see fit to include other rock poets in your magazine, let me offer some words of comfort. The one artist that I love more than Springsteen is Paul Simon. Paul's fans not only have to wait a minimum of three years between albums, we also don't have the luxuries of non-LP B-sides or bootlegs. Still, in the entire span of Paul Simon's career, only one album was not worth waiting for. I know that Springsteen won't be disappointing to many people either. Hang in there everybody, you're spoiled.

Sarah Weisman
Baltimore, MD

POINT BLANK

Dear Editor:

I'd like to say that you really hit the bull's eye with your essay on waiting for the next record. I often wonder if Bruce has any idea how much a new song means to those of us who are hardcore fans during the time between albums. When he's touring everybody is a fan, and afterward, ninety percent go on to Guns N' Roses or Phil Collins or whatever act is on this week's cover of *Rolling Stone*.

What about those of us for whom Bruce is never really on vacation? Am I blessed because I can always pull out a dozen live tapes or am I cursed because I know that he's recorded a hundred great songs that I'm never going to hear?

Joe Schwind
Richmond, VA

MAN AT THE TOP

Dear Editor:

Mike Appel wants you to believe he is a nice guy who finished last. If he truly believed his artist would be "a monstrous star," then why would he give Bruce 3.5% of wholesale album sales compared to his own 14%.

Joseph Lahr
Manchester, NH

EMOTIONALLY YOURS

Dear Editor:

If Mike Appel really believes that the guitar solo on "Prove It All Night" is a "piece of shit," then I seriously doubt his ability to judge anything in rock 'n' roll. That solo is what made me want to play guitar.

Sure Eddie Van Halen is faster, Page and Clapton have released more consistent six-string work, and Hendrix will always be the greatest. But, no one, absolutely no one has ever put more fire and passion into a guitar solo than that raw distorted burst of desperation in the middle of "Prove It All Night."

Randy J. Hansen
Indianapolis, IN

RESPECT

Dear Editor:

In response to Erik Flannigan's "The Waiting" editorial in Backstreets #36, the best things in life are worth waiting for. It's not that I wouldn't love to own an "official" Bruce Springsteen bootleg series, but I don't believe anyone has the right to demand more of such a gifted artist than whatever they want to give.

Bruce Springsteen's music is a gift that we should be grateful to receive whenever he's ready to give it to us. I will always cherish and appreciate the music Bruce gives to us whenever he is willing to give it. I respect Bruce's music too much to make demands like Erik Flannigan.

Jill Wolk Rohrberg
Lynn, MA

WHO DO YOU LOVE

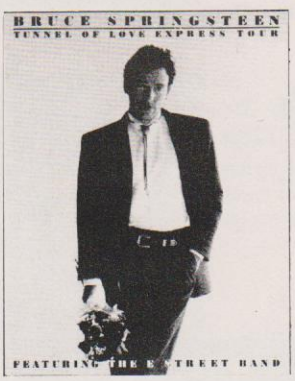
Dear Editor:

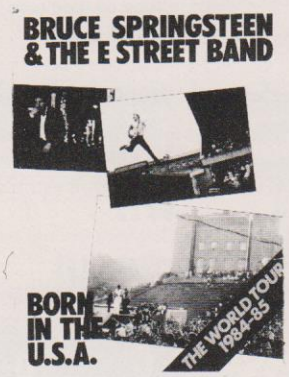
I'm sick of all these so called Bruce fans who are whining because a new album hasn't come forth yet. Sure it's been a long hard wait and I would love to hear a new album as much as anyone, but not until it's up to Bruce's standards.

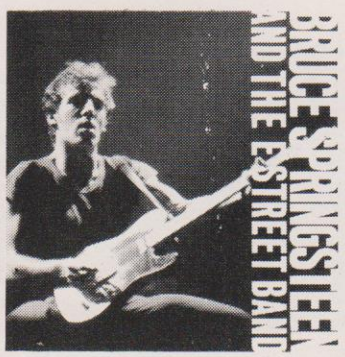
He hasn't disappointed me with an album yet and I'd wait four years or more if the next album is as great and satisfying as the rest have been.

I am more anxious and curi-

ORIGINAL SPRINGSTEEN TOURBOOKS







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ous to find out what new direction this album will take us. Will it be a hard rocking album like *Born in the USA*, or just the opposite, something like *Nebraska* (a favorite album of mine). Maybe it will be something completely new and different.

When Bruce announced that the E Street Band would not be on the album or touring with him, many fans wrote him off. I was a little worried myself, but I realize that Bruce is an artist, a man with much talent. He would be cheating his fans and himself if he didn't explore and challenge this talent.

Whatever this next album brings us, I'll be listening with open ears and an open mind.

Carol Biggs
Martinsville, VA

IT'S MY LIFE

Dear Editor:

I'm really sick of all these selfish Bruce fans getting on his case over the time it takes him to make an album. I mean, this man has already made the greatest nine albums known to man, and has done more in his first 41 years than any of you will do in a lifetime.

I'm just as anxious as anyone to hear some new Bruce, but do you realize that over the last three years he has gone from making a masterpiece (*Tunnel of Love*), to having every trash magazine rip into him, having private pictures splattered all over the place, to having a baby, getting a divorce and getting remarried?

It seems like you only care about what Bruce does for *you* and not what Bruce the man has gone through himself. I mean hey, at least you're not a Boston fan, who waits eight years only to hear the same old song.

F. Roll
La Habra, CA

SHOW A LITTLE FAITH

Dear Editor:

Okay bandwagon jumpers, the ride is over. Maybe if the *Born in the USA* tour lasted forever you'd all still be happy! I don't think these riders will like Bruce's new direction anyway.

To read your editorial and some people's comments is flat-out upsetting and ridiculous. "If Bruce is to remain a vital artist" Bullshit Erik! P.J. Sincavage goes on to say Bruce should be called "The Procrastinator." Well if procrastination equals excellence, I choose to wait.

It's not like there's no good music around (Neil Young, Paul Simon, Tom Petty, Nils Lofgren, REM, Costello). Should I continue? If we were starving, *For Our Children, Last Temptation of Elvis* and *Cover Me* are all cool records, with great Bruce songs on them. That alone should be enough to hold you over until "The Real World."

You ask the question, "Why does it take so long for Bruce to create his music?" My answer: none of your business. You don't ask a great painter, "Hey, how come it took you so long to paint?" Bruce paints with his words. I don't need no souped-up collection album, a la the Rolling Stones (*Flashpoint*), Grateful Dead (any album after 1972), or thrown together project (Dylan's *Down in the Groove*). What I want is a bonafide, five star thriller, and I'm very confident we will get it.

Eric Voelcker
Dublin, PA

ENDLESS NIGHT

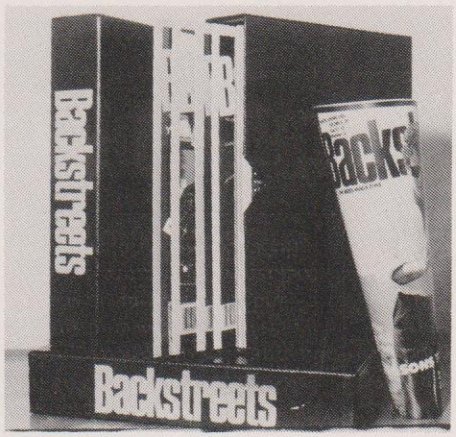
Dear Editor:

Erik Flannigan's editorial in *Backstreets* #36 couldn't have been more right on.

During this Bruce dry spell, I've spent a lot of time listening to country music. One of the things that impresses me about country music is the rapport that the artists — both established acts and the flock of new singers — have with their fans. They're on tour virtually all the time. When they're not, they're in the studio so that they can put out a new record about every 18 months. They also appear on television frequently, both for performances and interviews. Wouldn't it be wonderful if Bruce felt the same kind of commitment?

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33

THE BACKSTREETS BINDER



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About Backstreets Magazine

Backstreets is a quarterly magazine that covers the music of Bruce Springsteen and other Jersey Shore performers. The magazine began in 1980 and over the years has covered Bruce Springsteen's recordings and performances more extensively than any other publication in the world.

Backstreets appears generally every three or four months though the actual publication date is affected by breaking news, tour coverage and the occasional special issue. Each issue of the magazine is progressively numbered. Subscribers can tell how many issues remain on their current subscription by looking at the number that appears above their name on their mailing label. If that number (it follows an "X") is the same number as the latest issue, your subscription has expired.

Unlike most larger, consumer magazines, *Backstreets* does not have the resources to continually bombard subscribers with renewal mailings so we appreciate our subscribers taking note of their expiration date and renewing when appropriate. You can renew your subscription at any time, and your prompt and early renewal is a great aid to us. Since *Backstreets* carries very little paid advertising, subscription revenue and sales of back issues and books are the only real income the magazine has so by subscribing or renewing you help us with this admittedly modest effort and showing your support.

Backstreets is available on a limited number of select newstands around the nation, though newstand availability is not something you can count on in most areas. If you're interested in the magazine, we highly recommend that you consider subscribing since subscribers are offered numerous benefits (see Hotline section below), in addition to the convenience of getting *Backstreets* hot off the press and at a discount from the cover price.

Stores interested in carrying *Backstreets* can contact our office: Though the magazine's audience is select, the sell-through percentage is extremely high and the magazine is offered to distributors on a guaranteed full return basis. *Backstreets* is also handled by a number of independent distributors including Ingram, IPD and Performance Records.

Subscription rates for *Backstreets* are $15 a year in the US and Canada (all prices are in US dollars); $25 for two years; and $32 for three years (the best value with a savings of $13). Rates for overseas subscriptions are $20 per year (again in US funds), or $35 for a two year subscription. You can enter a new subscription or renew your current subscription by writing to Subscriber Services, *Backstreets*, PO Box 51225, Seattle, WA 98115.

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The Backstreets Hotline

To keep our subscribers updated with the current information during the time between issues, *Backstreets* provides a 24 hour a day information phone message, called the *Backstreets* Hotline. The Hotline is updated at least every week and contains all the latest available information on album releases, tour dates and appearances. There is no charge at present for the Hotline, though callers will pay the normal long distance charges if you are out of our calling area. The line gets hundreds of calls each week so calling at off hours is the best way to access it.

The phone number to the *Backstreets* Hotline is unlisted and unpublished since because of the high volume of calls the service can only be provided to current subscribers of the magazine. To assure that the service is only made available to those subscribers, the number to the Hotline is printed on the mailing sheet that goes to subscribers with each issue. We do change the number frequently to insure that the service is only accessed by those who are current subscribers (the number does occasionally get passed around by fans and even has been announced on the radio which causes the lines to be overloaded with non-subscribers who don't help support the service). If you're unsure of the present number for the Hotline and you are a current subscriber drop us an SASE, and we'll send it to you.

SuperSubs

Partially because of the demands of the Hotline, *Backstreets* also has a SuperSub program for those hardcore fans who also serve as the supporting members of our magazine. SuperSubs get an entire package of subscriber services in addition to their normal subscription and they are sent a special SuperSub-only Hotline number. SuperSub benefits include receiving the magazine sent first class, a special edition SuperSub t-shirt, a free classified ad in each issue, and a first class subscription to all Backstreet Records catalogs. Information on a SuperSub membership can be found on the inside back page.

Love letters, hate mail, etc.

Backstreets is very much a forum for the ideas and input of the many subscribers who contribute to the effort each issue. Letters to the editor are always welcome and we read them all and publish as many as space permits. Clips and xeroxes of news items sent in by subscribers are essential in helping us keep the magazine and hotline informative. Due to the number of inquiries we receive we cannot always answer every letter but we do respond to all who send in a SASE with their inquiry.

Backissues and past glories

Backstreets is the longest running Springsteen fanzine and it has been in business for over 11 years. The total number of pages we've published over the years represents the single largest chunk of Bruce Springsteen information ever compiled under one roof. Though many of the earliest issues are sold out and command high prices on the collector's market, a number of back issues are still available at reasonable prices until supplies are deleted. You'll find an order form in this issue of back issues still available or call our office.

In late 1989 a collection of some of the best articles from the magazine was published in the hardback book, *Backstreets, Springsteen: The Man and His Music* from Harmony Books. This 224 page book collects some of the best from past issues of *Backstreets* and also includes an extensive discography and a complete listing of all concerts Bruce Springsteen has ever performed. The book contains over 150 photographs of Springsteen, many in full color, and most have never been published before. *Record Collector* magazine described the book as "Wonderful, the best possible buy for the Springsteen convert," while the *Asbury Park Press* called the selection of photos "brilliant." The book is available in finer bookstores or by mail by calling *Backstreets* Orderline at (206) 728-7603.

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Backstreets also has a separate division called Backstreet Records that publishes a mail order catalog of official and authorized Bruce Springsteen merchandise. Backstreet Records carries numerous books and fanzines about Bruce Springsteen and other related artists. You'll find information on getting the catalog mailing regularly on the inside back cover or you can write Backstreet Records at PO Box 51219, Seattle, WA 98115.

In dreams I walk alone

Dream Baby

Last night I awoke from a wondrous and joyful dream about a new Bruce Springsteen tour. I often dream of Springsteen concerts, which isn't weird when you consider the line of work I'm in. When I worked as a cashier at Drug Fair, back when I was 16, I used to dream about Presidents Day Sales and blue light specials. Freud or Jung would have had a field day with my dreams, since my nocturnal fantasies are always vivid. I can remember them distinctly and I keep a dream journal.

I don't think this particular dream is one that should send me to a shrink's couch, but the excitement and anticipation does reflect my conscious mind's desire for new Bruce Springsteen music: Like everyone else reading this magazine, I *want* a new album and tour.

I got it in my dream. Come the end of this year (or the first of next year, depending on what report you want to believe), we'll get it in the waking world. Still, if dreams came true wouldn't it be nice? Here's mine . . . .

I am hanging out backstage before the first concert of Bruce Springsteen's new tour and I am filled with expectancy. It is not your usual backstage scene since the setting is a soccer field on the grounds of the high school I attended in 1972. The grass is slightly moist, as I remember the grass always was on this soccer field. Springsteen is set to play a show on the football field and the audience will sit in the bleachers. I am sitting behind the bleachers and I can see all sorts of garbage that has already been dropped to the ground.

The accommodations are not exactly plush but this boosts my mood and makes the whole scene seem more like an informal get together rather than the debut concert of a new tour and a new band. A half dozen players are sitting around a few card tables and they are the new E Street Band. The drummer is a young white guy with blonde dreadlocks, wearing an old Italian man shirt. He seems like the nicest guy in the world, acts very friendly toward me, and seems very concerned that the hardcore Springsteen fans accept him. Talking to him I am impressed by the warmth of his personality, though I still wonder to myself if this guy could ever pack the same punch as Max Weinberg. I ask him if he thinks people will compare him to Max and he says candidly, "Well, Bruce wanted something new and *we* are something new."

The new E Street Band also contains something old and I'm surprised to see Steve Van Zandt sitting around the card tables. The card tables are particularly flimsy and resting on them are several paper plates filled with carrot sticks and celery with peanut butter spread on them. Steve Van Zandt is eating one of these pieces of celery and I'm shocked when I notice that he is not wearing a hat and has hair. He has a head of curly hair, and looks like he did in the picture in the last issue of *Backstreets*. Steve looks young again, and it impresses me that he seems so happy and relaxed. I ask him what he feels upon rejoining the band and he says he can't wait to play again. "I'm leading the guitar assault," he jokes.

It is early evening on this soccer field in Willimantic, Connecticut, and there is already dew on the grass. There are no security guards around and a few fans wander in and start talking to the band members. There is none of the feeling of exclusivity that I have associated with the backstage scene at Springsteen shows in the past, just a down home, laid-back feeling. Sitting on my fragile folding chair, I can hear Springsteen himself practicing some of his new songs just on the other side of the bleachers.

I can't help but keep thinking how nice it is to be seeing a Springsteen concert at such an informal and unusual location. For the last several years I wondered if I would ever feel as passionate about Bruce Springsteen's music as I did back in the late '70s and early '80s. But here on the soccer field, I keep thinking of *The River* tour and what a strong impression those performances made on me. Though the *Darkness* shows were far more intense and the playing was superb, *The River* tour was an emotional time for me and every show I saw brought forth a wave of feeling. With Roy Bittan's many moving segues, on songs like "Point Blank" and "Stolen Car," I found myself at times not knowing whether to smile or cry, but I always felt a groundswell of emotion. Hanging around this card table reminded me of how sentimental I can get, and what warm feelings I felt around the time of that tour.

I stood up to move towards the football field for the show and . . . my alarm went off. End of dream.

What does this all mean? You don't have to be a therapist to realize that I'm waiting with anticipation for the next chapter in the Bruce Springsteen story. My dream is also a way of my unconscious brain coming to terms with the fact that that next Bruce tour — presumably without the E Street Band — will be dramatically different than anything we've seen in the past two decades. Though Springsteen has performed a few solo concerts over the years, but he has not toured without Garry Tallent on bass and Danny Federici on keyboards since 1971. Bruce was 22 years old then.

My dream also reminded me of how for the better part of two decades, Springsteen's albums and concerts have been wellsprings of emotions for me, how they have always made whatever I was experiencing in my life all the more emotional. Springsteen's music, like an old friend, serves to make me reflect on where my life has been and where it is going.

Bruce Springsteen's music is now undeniably part of my past and part of my life. Even if I am never to hear a Springsteen album again, the music that I listened to growing up will have a place in me forever. For the rest of my life I will think of my earlier pubescent angst when I hear the first Springsteen record. When I think of *Born to Run*, I will always think of my first car. *Darkness* will always remind me of my first love. My life has become intertwined with Bruce Springsteen's music and whether I like it or not, those records are part of me.

In the same sense, my experiences in high school will forever be in my psyche. I graduated from high school 16 years ago and I never looked back—like Frank Zappa I believe real life is revenge for high school. I haven't stayed in touch with the people I went to high school with and I haven't been to any reunions. High school was a painful time for me, and even thinking about it today reminds me of what it was like to walk down the halls and get tripped by guys on the football team.

Those creeps still show up in my dreams with their big ugly legs sticking out and sometimes I step over them, and sometimes I fall. And sometimes I kiss Debbie Lynch on the bus, like I did in 1972, and sometimes I chicken out. But along with Debbie Lynch and football behemoths, the music of a fucked up high school kid from New Jersey is playing. Sometimes it sounds like the Animals and now and then it sounds like nothing I've ever heard before.

I close my eyes, as Roy Orbison sings for the lonely, in beautiful dreams.

— Charles R. Cross

Nick Clemons trades sax for guitar

Spotlight on the little big man

By Robert Santelli

He isn't known as Little Big Man or even Son of Big Man. Not yet, anyway. But Nick Clemons, whose father is Clarence — and who plays guitar instead of saxophone — made his debut at the Stone Pony in May. According to Clemons, he hopes to follow in his father's footsteps without stepping into his shoes.

"I experimented a little with saxophone," said Clemons from his Jersey Shore home, "but I found that the guitar came more natural to me. I couldn't get the air you need to play the sax. Besides, I don't want to hang on to anyone's coat tails."

With Clemons writing and singing the songs and playing rhythm guitar, the rest of the Nick Clemons Band is made up of lead guitarist Joe Boris, bass player Andre Cholmondeley, keyboard player Mike Otterbine, and drummer Bob Ramos. "I've heard people say we sound like everyone from James Taylor to Joe Jackson," continues Clemons. "We blend a lot of things: country, jazz, fusion, but we're pretty much doing our own thing."

The seeds for the band were planted, says Clemons, a year and a half ago, but it's been only since last September that the quintet has taken itself seriously. Aside from the Pony show, the most celebrated gig the Nick Clemons Band has ever played was New Year's Eve in San Francisco, when they opened for Clarence Clemons and the Red Bank Rockers at the Hard Rock Cafe.

Did Dad push his son to seek a career in music? "Music was always encouraged, but I was never pushed into it," explains Clemons. "Dad always said that it's a hard route to take, and if I was going to take it, that I would have put my heart into it."

In addition to his Dad, Nick Clemons counts Bruce Springsteen and Neil Young among his biggest influences, and it isn't difficult to detect their effect on his music thus far. However, the fact that Clemons does not have a sax player in his band helps him separate him from his E Street connections.

Nick Clemons following in his fathers footsteps at the Stone Pony

DEBRA L. ROTHENBERG PHOTO

"I'm trying to keep a level head," says Clemons. "That's the most important thing. I've got to prove myself out there, before anything else."

As for the elder Clemons, his son reports that a new album is on the horizon. "I bet it comes out sometime around the end of the summer," says Nick. "It's a record in which my Dad has returned to his roots; it sounds really great."

Speaking of albums, one you ought to check out is Billy Falcon's *Pretty Blue World* (Jambco /Mercury). Produced by Jon Bon Jovi and Danny Kortchmar, *Pretty Blue World* is the album Falcon fans always knew he had in him. It's alive with poetic lyricism and a powerful sincerity and moves along in a folk-rockish vein. Picture an artist influenced by Springsteen and John Mellencamp, but who has his own views on life's complexities and its pain, and delivers them in terse, heartfelt songs such as "Heaven's Highest Hill" and "Die Twice."

Just who is Falcon? Longtime Jersey Shore fans might recall the Long Island-based Billy Falcon and the Burning Rose packing the first rendition of the Asbury Park club the Fast Lane in the late '70s and early '80s. A superb songwriter even back then, Falcon released three albums before teaming up with Bon Jovi, who also was cutting his rock 'n' roll teeth at the Fast Lane ten years ago with a band called the Rest.

Another singer-songwriter with Jersey connections is John Gorka, whose latest album, *Jack's Crows*, on High Street Records (Windham Hill) contains the gem, "I'm From New Jersey." Born in Newark and raised in Colonia, Gorka told *New Jersey Monthly* about the origins of the song:

"I was playing a club in Massachusetts once, and someone asked me if I was from New Jersey. I said, 'Yeah. Does it show?'" The song, with its starkly satirical lyrics: "I'm from New Jersey/My Mom's Italian/I've read those Mafia books/We don't belong," is just one of many well-crafted songs on *Jack's Crows*.

You might want to pick up Gorka's new album, but definitely pass on Eddie Rabbitt's latest, even though it too has a New Jersey tune on it. Rabbitt, raised in East Orange, but for years a resident of Nashville, even used the song for his album's title track. It's called "Jersey Boy," and it's a schmaltzy, romantic view of Jersey with a country slant.

Why the sudden interest in New Jersey with these two songwriters?

Gorka explains: "I think a lot of songwriters who don't live in New Jersey anymore still have some sort of deep connection with it." Hear that Bruce?

The fourth annual Jersey Shore Jazz & Blues Festival was held in May at the Count Basie Theatre in Red Bank and at Marine Park, along the shores of the Navesink River. This year's event marked the first time the festival moved out of the clubs and both into the concert hall and onto the grass. Saturday night's tribute to Tal Farlow featured no less than nine guitarists, including Larry Coryell and Mark Whitfield, saluting the Shore's master jazzman. The Jersey Shore Jazz & Blues Foundation honored Farlow with a Lifetime Achievement Award, the first the organization has ever given out.

The Basie blues portion of the fest featured performances by Robert Jr. Lockwood, Johnny Copeland, Junior Wells and Otis Rush. Add to all this, sparkling outdoor sets by such local jazz and blues acts as the Fairlanes, the Fins, Blue Gumbo and Big Danny Gallagher and the Lost Leader Band, and it's not surprising that the festival attracted 40,000 people.

LIPS

FROM SMALL THINGS: Although it has been more than three years since Bruce Springsteen sat down for an in-depth interview, he isn't afraid to sit in on other artists' interviews. In one such conversation with Crowded House, documented in the July issue of *Mix* magazine, Springsteen dropped by for a brief chat with Paul Hester, Neil Finn, Nick Seymour and journalist Bonzai. A transcription of their short visit follows: Paul: "Hello there!" Springsteen: "How ya doin'?" Bonzai: "Could you join in the interview?" Paul: "Need a publicity boost?" Bonzai: "Have you heard the new tracks?" Springsteen: "No, but I've heard the old stuff — love that last record too. So, how'd the gig go the other night?" Neil: "Great. Yeah, it was good." Springsteen: "You had a good time?" Nick: "Very loose, actually, a lot of fun." Paul: "We wrote a song onstage during the encore, dedicated to the young swimmer Haley Lewis." Springsteen: "You guys finished your record?" Neil: "Yes, right this minute, with the gaps and all. And you're nearly finished?" Springsteen: "Yeah, just about. . . I'm hustlin'." Neil: "We'd like to get to some radio stations before they dive into your record." Paul: "Maybe we could slip our record into your jacket cover." Springsteen: "You know, one of my early records ended up in a Barbra Streisand album jacket. They went out before the release date, accidentally. People were bringing them back wondering, 'What is this?'" Neil: "'Barbra's voice has really changed.'" Springsteen: "Hey, good luck with the record." [He exits stage left]. When Crowded House isn't being interviewed with Springsteen, you can catch them on tour this fall. . . Along with the likes of Jerry Garcia, Pete Townshend, Sam Moore, and Aretha Franklin, Bruce Springsteen has joined the Artists Advisory Committee of The Rhythm & Blues Foundation. Based in Washington, D.C., the Foundation works to foster public awareness and cultural preservation of the R&B genre through financial assistance to musicians and is developing a rhythm and blues archive in cooperation with the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History.

TURN UP THE BAND: Those who attended a post-Grammy bash at the New York Hilton were treated to a particularly potent blend of New Jersey rockers, headed by drummer Dennis Diken and singer/guitarist Pat DiNizio of the Smithereens. Other members included E Streeters Garry Tallent and Max Weinberg, Marshall Crenshaw, Ronnie Spector, Ben E. King and Darlene Love. Look for the new Smithereens album, *Blow Up*, in September. . . . Nils Lofgren took time from his spring tour itinerary to appear on the Larry King Show (hosted by Jim Bohanon) on June 25th. Nils performed two songs and indicated that his version of Bruce's "Man At The Top" would soon be released. . . . Bobby Bandiera played with the Dave Edmunds Band in Hawaii on June 21st, singing lead on the Roy Orbison chestnuts "Crying" and "Running Scared." Thanks to *Backstreets* subscriber Jeff Mahon for his review of the show.

COVER ME: A bill before the Louisiana house would make it illegal to sell a record to minors that contains references to sex or violence. Similar bills are before legislative bodies in 12 other states. If a majority of those bills passes, Congress may take action a similar bill to apply such law in all 50 states. Does this mean that someone under the age of 18 may not be able to obtain a copy of *The River* because of, say, "Ramrod" or "Point Blank"? . . . As if Chrysler's *Born In America* ad series weren't enough, fans of Bruce Springsteen are now faced with an ad campaign by the U.S. Army that co-opts "My Hometown." The recruiting spot — the newest since the Persian Gulf War — features "stripped-down heartland rock" over "images of Americana we've learned from Kodak commercials," according to the *LA Weekly*. In the piece, writer

JERRY CICCONE PHOTO

"Waitin' for my odometer to roll straight sevens . . . "

Robert Fiore takes Bruce to task for not making "a definite stand. The trouble with Springsteen is that while he's willing to play 'Who'll Stop The Rain,' he's not willing to do 'Fortunate Son.' You try to be everybody's friend like Springsteen and and you wind up being everybody's tool," Fiore writes. Seems like out and out thievery to us, and anyone who reads this magazine realizes that this isn't the first time that Springsteen's music has been exploited for questionable — if not entirely wrong — ends. Furthermore, Bruce *has* played "Fortunate Son."

GOIN' BACK: Former E Street Band pianist David Sancious reminisced on his days with Bruce in a recent *Musician* magazine piece. In addition to recounting how Springsteen decided to name the group ("He kept saying it over and over. 'E Street Band. Yeah.' It sounded good to him, it had a rhythm to it."), Sancious said that he enjoyed his appearances with the band in a stadium environment during the 1988 Amnesty tour. Sancious has contributed to the forthcoming Springsteen album, and added that it's "definitely Bruce, but rhythmically and even sonically it didn't have that E Street Band stamp, which I found refreshing." David has toured and recently recorded with Peter Gabriel. He is currently on tour with Bruce's pal Sting. . . .

LOOSE ENDS: VH-1 recently sent a crew to Asbury Park to interview Springsteen fans for a segment entitled "Bruce Superstar Sunday." Those who auditioned for the show were asked to relate stories about their experiences as fans of Bruce's music. They ranged from the mildly interesting (one fellow smoked his first joint — with his mother — at a Springsteen show) to the truly remarkable: Lance Larson, a Jersey musician, told how he had driven around the shore with Bruce in 1983, and given Bruce the red baseball cap now immortalized on the cover of *Born In The U.S.A.* VH-1 aired the piece July 7th. . . . Long Island's Public Television Station aired the Harry Chapin Benefit Concert Video in early August including Bruce's version of "Remember When The Music." It's scheduled for home video release by Christmas. . . . Sean Penn's film "Indian Runner," inspired by "Highway Patrolman," premieres in this fall. . . .The 25th anniversary live album from the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, *Live Two Five*, closes with a cover of "Cadillac Ranch." . . . A story in the *San Francisco Chronicle* outlined a recent survey undertaken to match popular colognes with popular father figures, including Spike Lee, Pope John Paul II, Woody Allen, and Bruce Springsteen. The match for Springsteen? Polo. The Pope, perhaps the quintessential father figure, was matched with Obsession and Stetson. Now if we could only get the Pontiff to wear Nils Lofgren's foam hat during "Cadillac Ranch." . . . Bo knows the Boss, sort of: In an early 1991 interview about the current state of music, Bo Diddley said, "I love the hell out of Bruce Springsteen, but he is not rock 'n roll. He's more or less a chip off the ol' Jimi Hendrix thing, the acid rock . . . Don't try to put it in the same category with . . . Elvis Presley, Fats Domino . . . Aretha Franklin . . . these are the real rockers." Maybe, but we can't quite imagine Bruce covering "Third Stone From The Sun."

THE NEWS

Two club dates on the shore

Bruce says album in December?

After many false hopes, there may be reason to believe that Bruce Springsteen will release his next album in the first quarter of 1992, most likely in January or February, or perhaps late '91.

This speculation has been prompted by the circumstances surrounding Bruce's return to the East Coast in early July and again in August. His first order of business was to venture into New York City, where he recorded his contribution to Southside Johnny's new record (see page 11), produced by Little Steven. Bruce spent July 2nd laying down some acoustic guitar and background vocals on a song he wrote and gave to Southside for the record titled "All the Way Home."

While back east, Bruce spent time in New Jersey, and showed up at Rumrunners July 12th for a five-song jam with Bobby Bandiera. Many thought Bruce would play the previous weekend, and the crowd caused by such a rumor packed Rumrunners, but Bruce reportedly backed off when he saw the size of the crowd. A week later, and earlier in the evening, most Shore Bruce fans thought he had already headed west when he ventured into Rumrunners for a quick set with Bandiera consisting of "From Small Things," "Jersey Girl," "Boom Boom," "Travelin' Band" and the inevitable "Glory Days."

Part of the reason for the trip to the Garden State was for Patti to attend her high school reunion. Bruce didn't join her at the event, but according to *USA Today*, he did spend a few minutes chatting with fans and a parking lot attendant after dropping her off at a hotel. The unnamed attendant was quoted in *USA Today* as saying that Bruce told him he would have his album out by Christmas.

Days later, during his performance with Bandiera, Springsteen repeated the same message to the crowd, reportedly telling them that the album would be released in December and that a tour would follow in the new year. Both messages are the first by Bruce himself concerning the release of the record, and have to be taken more seriously than rumors.

Hot on the heels of these announcements (both of which went on to be widely reported in other media), came those rumors expounding on Bruce's brief comments. All of them supported what Bruce said, but added some interesting specifics. One rumor said that Bruce had gone out east to record with Southside, but also to turn the record over to Bob Clearmountain for final mixing and mastering. This meant that the record might be out as early as the first week of October. Another even contemplated a double length release.

Despite these positive signs, the first week of August saw semi-official denials of any release in 1991. The first came in *Billboard* Magazine, which quoted an unnamed source close to the Springsteen camp, as saying that contrary to rumors, Bruce Springsteen's next album will not be issued in 1991. Later the same week, *USA Today* reported in that a Springsteen album wouldn't be issued until 1992, according to Columbia sources.

But on August 4, Bruce was again back on the Shore and up on stage, this time with the band the Outcry. The five-song set at Cheers in Long Branch included "Ain't That a Shame," "People Get Ready," "Not Fade Away," "Stand By Me" and "Travelin' Band."

Some said Bruce was back on the Shore to testify in the lawsuit brought by his former roadies, but whatever the reason, after months of seclusion in the studio in Los Angeles, these east coast trips might indicate that the record is completed.

If rumors are to be believed, the studio process behind this record has been classic Springsteen. Sources say that Bruce was eager to release material recorded last spring and summer, with guests including David Sancious, up until the birth of his son Evan. At that point, an insider says, Bruce abandoned most of those songs and began writing and recording all new work at a prolific clip. This could mean that some of the famous names associated with the early sessions may not end up on the finished record.

Regardless of who's on the record, there is some consensus for a new Bruce record in the next six months, but no source, official or otherwise, has much of a clue what a tour would entail. The questions are obvious: Will Bruce tour with a band or solo? If he has a band, who will be in it? Will Bruce play stadiums, arenas, theatres or clubs? No one knows.

Once again it is wait and see, though the picture gets slowly brighter with each passing day. After all, official denials are better than no denials at all. Just a few months ago, the same sources wouldn't even bother to respond to rumors. Perhaps *The Real World* will arrive as surreptitiously as *Tunnel of Love* did.

— Erik Flannigan

Robbin Thomson releases new album

Half his life ago, Robbin Thompson was the lead singer for Steel Mill — a Shore band which featured a fledgling guitarist named Bruce Springsteen. The Boss eventually moved up to the mike and worldwide fame.

Thompson, meanwhile, picked up a guitar made by his father, kept on singing and built a loyal following in Virginia and the Carolinas. He hasn't talked with his former bandmate in a while. "All the numbers I have for Bruce are no good anymore," says Robbin. "It'd be nice to hear from him again."

Now 42, Thompson has flirted with national recognition several times, most notably with a pair of singles — "Candy Apple Red" and "Brite Eyes" — whcih cracked the charts in the late '70s. He still plays several live shows each month, and not long ago fulfilled a lifelong dream by opening for Bob Dylan. And he's built a thriving advertising jingle business.

Recently, he's released his sixth record, *I Don't Need a Reason to Ride*.

Thompson's originals dip into several genres. The title song is a cowboy ballad that began life as a Wrangler commercial. "Out of Control" and "I Swear I'll Never Do it Again" are straight-on rockers. "How Do You Know When It's a Heartbreak" and "That's Just the Way Love Is" are catchy, contemporary (read: no twang) country. Thompson's own compositions far outshine cover versions of "I Feel Fine" and Buddy Holly's "Learning the Game," although the latter is notable for an appearance by pal Bruce Hornsby.

The album's gem is "She's So Cool," a seductive, hook-laden delight that's among the most listenable tunes to feature an accordion since the Rascals' "How Can I Be Sure."

In addition to Hornsby, guests on this album include guitarist Mike McAdam (who's played with Steve Earle and is currently with B.J. Thomas), vocalist Debra Henry (who's backed-up Patti Labelle), and sax player Joe McGlohon.

Copies of *I Don't Need a Reason to Ride* are available from Out There Music, PO Box 3554, Bon Air Branch, Richmond, VA 23235 ($11 Cassette, $16 CD postpaid).

— Randy Cepuch

THE NEWS

Bruce, Southside & Steven Reunited

Southside sees Better Days ahead

Southside Johnny's new album *Better Days* is scheduled for release in late October and looks to be the Jersey album of the year, at least until Springsteen's album is released.

Better Days marks a reunion of many kinds for Southside Johnny. First and foremost is a rejoining with Little Steven, whose vision and songwriting were such a big part of Southside's first three albums on Epic. Steven returns to the fold as both producer and arranger of *Better Days*, as well as writer or co-writer of nine of the album's eleven tunes.

Another reunion is the one between Springsteen and Southside. Songwriting contributions from Bruce were so integral to Southside's first three records, and apart from a rewrite of an old Bruce melody on *Slow Dance* ("Walking Through Midnight"), Bruce has not contributed to a Southside album in well over a decade.

Springsteen makes two appearances on the album, first trading lead vocals with Southside and Steven on "It's Been a Long Time," and later backing up Southside on his own original "All the Way Home." The former tune, written by Steven, is a reflection of sorts on the old days on the Shore. "All the Way Home" is a Springsteen original not unlike "One Step Up" musically, and "Walk Like a Man" lyrically. Bruce adds back-up vocals, guitars and keyboards to an impassioned vocal from Southside.

Better Days is billed to Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes, though E Street Band members make significant contributions as well. Max Weinberg and Garry Tallent form the rhythm section for the record, while lead guitar chores are split evenly between Little Steven and Bobby Bandiera. Rusty Cloud is also on board on keyboards.

Southside and Rick Moranis on SCTV.

Weinberg described the sessions as "an unbelievably great experience," in an interview in *Bam* Magazine. "I got to play with Garry Tallent," said Max, "my favorite bass player, and together we are a long-time rhythm section. Great songs."

Of course no Southside record would be complete without lots of horns. Members of both the Miami Horns and Jukes horn sections participate, all arranged by Little Steven (hence the return of the "Miami" Horns), with charts written by the fabulous Richie "La Bamba" Rosenberg.

The other nine songs on the record are "Coming Back" (written by Steven), "All I Needed Was You" (written by Steven), "Souls on Fire" (written by Steven), "Better Days" (written by Steven), "I've Been Working Too Hard" (written by Steven), "Ride the Night Away" (written by Steven and drummer Steve Jordan), "The Right to Walk Away" (written by Steven, Leroy Preston and Dennis Locorriere), "All Night Long" (played live last year and written by Southside and Bobby Bandiera), and "Shake 'em Down" (written by Steven).

The songs are all new compositions with the exception of "Ride the Night Away," written in 1985, and originally recorded by Australian rocker Jimmy Barnes on his first US album.

Recording of the album commenced in late May and wrapped up with Bruce's contributions the first week of July. Southside's new label, Impact, appears to be solidly behind this release in a manner clearly lacking for many of Southside's recent releases.

The sessions were described as friendly and efficient with Steven clearly and authoritatively at the helm. In fact, the recording went so smoothly and quickly that the record could have wrapped in late June had they not had to wait for Springsteen to travel to Sigma Sound Studios in New York.

Southside is expected to tour with the release of *Better Days*, with one date, Southside's annual appearance at the Garden States Arts Center, already set for September 3rd. Rumor is that Johnny will mount a major tour in support of the record, with a revolving list of guests joining a core band in selected cities.

On all fronts, *Better Days* seems a new starting point for Southside Johnny and nearly as much for Little Steven. The record reunites the three major players of the Shore music scene in the seventies — Southside, Springsteen and Steven — for the first time in a decade. For fans, its a chance to fall in love all over again with the "sound of Asbury Park."

the backstreets jukebox

1. **Bruce Springsteen**
   Born to Run
   Columbia (Half-speed Master LP)
2. **Elvis Costello**
   Mighty Like a Rose
   Warner Brothers (CD)
3. **The Who**
   The Who By Numbers
   MCA (CD)
4. **Little Steven**
   Voice of America
   Razor and Tie (CD)
5. **The Smithereens**
   Green Thoughts
   Enigma (CD)
6. **Richard Thompson**
   Rumor and Sigh
   Capitol (CD)
7. **The Soft Boys**
   Underwater Moonlight
   Glass Fish (CD)
8. **Lyle Lovett**
   Pontiac
   Curb/MCA (CD)
9. **Bob Dylan and the Band**
   Before the Flood
   Columbia (CD)
10. **Gary U.S. Bonds**
    Dedication
    Razor and Tie (CD)

10 Monster Discs to Play Today and Everyday

New York City Serenade

Gray Russell tells tales of Darkness in a Dark City

Darkness on the Edge of Town is considered by many to be Bruce Springsteen's seminal album, but the making of it was arguably the most difficult period of his career and the first in an unbroken string of arduous recording processes for every album since.

Though Springsteen's superstar status seems so entrenched now, coming off of a two year hiatus from recording forced by a lawsuit with his manager Mike Appel, *Darkness* was a comeback. Its failure would have left Springsteen as a momentary legend (or hype) in rock 'n' roll history. More than *Born to Run*, it was the album that sealed Springsteen's career, that assured him a place in the '80s. Springsteen laid it all on the line with *Darkness*.

Bruce's lawsuit with Mike Appel was finally settled in May of 1977. With the injunction preventing Bruce from entering a recording studio lifted, Springsteen and the E Street Band headed quickly to the Record Plant in New York City. The recording which commenced would last well into the next year, as Bruce and Jon Landau struggled and debated over what would be Springsteen's first (and perhaps last) musical statement in three years.

In assembling the production team for the recording, Landau and Springsteen chose to return to the Record Plant, where they had recorded *Born to Run*, and Jimmy Iovine, who had engineered and mixed Bruce's third album. Iovine in turn enlisted Thom Panunzio as assistant engineer, who had contributed to *Born to Run* as well. Some of the Record Plant's house staff was also involved in the project, including engineer Gray Russell.

Russell worked on a variety of projects for the Record Plant, and by being a Jersey boy and a Bruce fan, he was frequently part of Jimmy Iovine's engineering team. Though Russell wasn't involved in all of the *Darkness* recording sessions, he was brought into the very small braintrust of Bruce, Landau and Iovine, when assistant Thom Panunzio requested a vacation from the prolonged sessions.

The story behind the recording of *Darkness* lies primarily in Springsteen, Landau and Iovine, but they're not talking. Gray Russell spent almost three weeks in the role of assistant engineer during mixing and some recording sessions. As a Bruce fan himself, Gray kept tabs on what was going on in the studio even when he was not directly involved. Though he can't offer insight into the entire studio process behind *Darkness*, he does provide an insider's glimpse at the recording of the album, and his views on Bruce himself and his music are provocative.

Backstreets contributor, and editor of the Italian Springsteen fanzine *Follow That Dream*, Ermanno Labianca met up with Gray Russell last year in New York City and talked with him about sharing the studio with Springsteen.

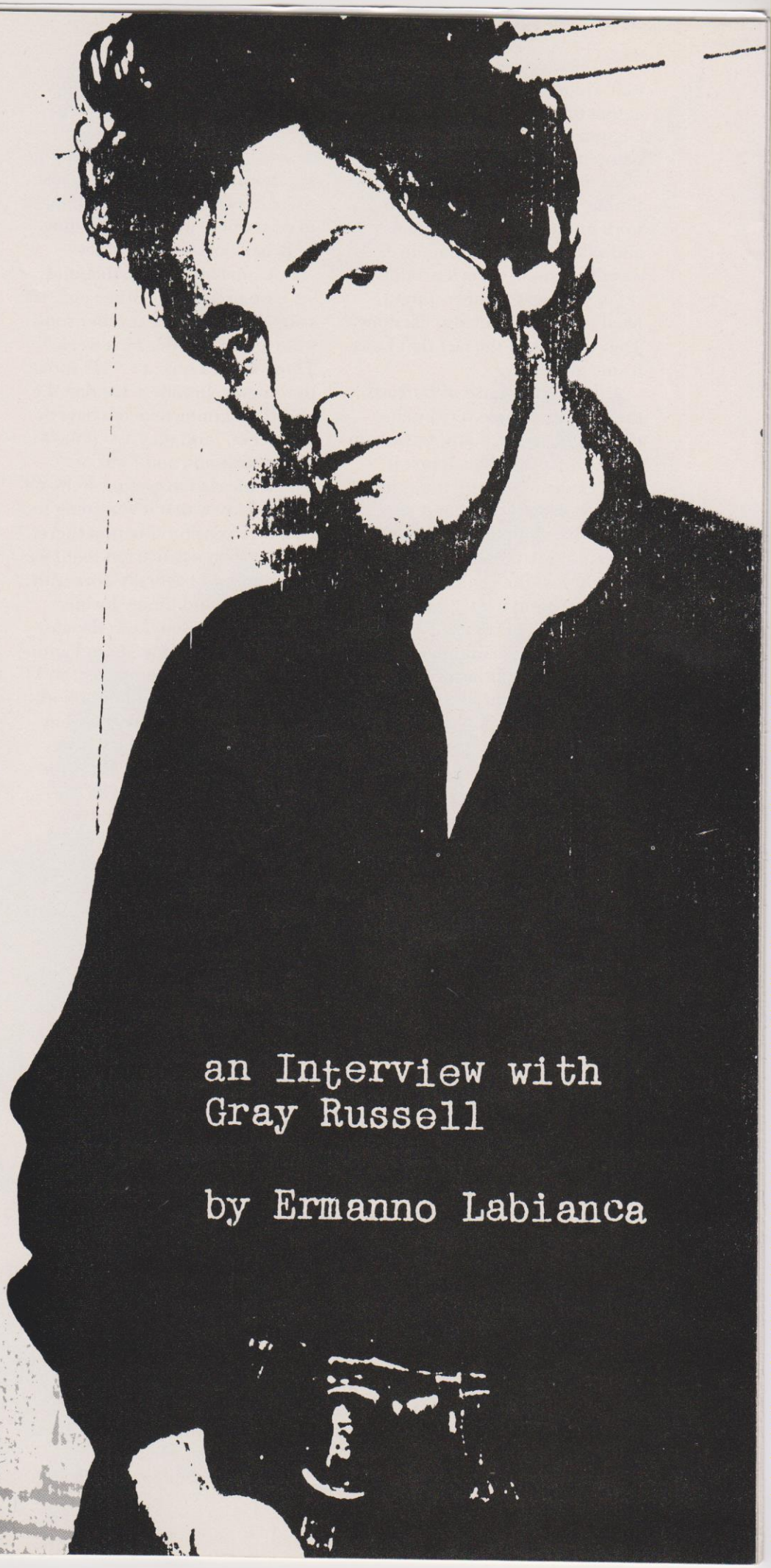
Backstreets: ***How did you begin as an engineer?***

Gray Russell: The studio business was jumping in New York City. This was around 1976, in the middle of 1976 when I began at the Record Plant. That's where Bruce had recorded *Born to Run*, and I was a big Bruce fan. Several other artists I was a fan of also recorded at the Record Plant including Patti Smith. I might say that when I was living in England in 1975, the only news I heard of from America was about the movie *Jaws*, and Bruce Springsteen. I heard about those two things all the time in magazines and newspapers. Everybody who was talking about America, talked about *Jaws* and Bruce Springsteen. In fact, I went to see Bruce's concert in London, at the Hammersmith in '75, and that blew me away. I bought the *Born to Run* album when I was over there, and fell in love with it, and that's when he came to London. I had to have a seat there.

But listening to the album was one of the things that made me decide to come back to the U.S. When I started at the Record Plant, although Bruce wasn't working, he came there a couple of times with Jimmy Iovine. I was really. . . I was so pleased to meet Bruce Springsteen. I mean, it was a thrill to me to meet this guy. And also there were gold records on the wall, and a lot of bands I was a fan of had recorded there. I guess the whole recording studio scene in New York City was quite busy and quite jumping in those days, almost 15 years ago now.

What was the first album you worked on?

The first album I ever worked as an assistant was with the Alice Cooper Band, not Alice, but his band the Billion Dollar Babies. It was a terrible record I think. It was produced by Lee Di Carlo. He was the engineer also, but my first credit, the first record credit I got was with Jimmy Iovine. It was Jimmy's first ever production, a band called Flame, on RCA



an Interview with Gray Russell

by Ermanno Labianca

Records, and the singer was a girl named Margie. The lead guitar player was Jimmy Crespo, he went on to later play with Aerosmith, when Joe Perry left the band for a short period. It was a good album, *Queen of the Neighborhood*. Shelly Yakus (who later worked with Bruce) engineered. I didn't assist the entire album but that's the first time I saw my name on an album.

Is there a record that particularly inspired you?

I've been a music fanatic since I was a child. It's hard for me to think to one record, since music has been an inspiration, a big part of my background. But I will say that *Born to Run*, at the time when I was trying to make some decisions in my life, *Born to Run* cemented the fact that music is something you can do for your whole life and restated to me something about the States, something about America. I would say that *Born to Run* was certainly one of my top ten inspirational records.

Tell me about working with Bruce on the* Darkness *album.

I met Bruce a couple of times. He was coming in and out of the Record Plant, and he knew I was a fan. He knew I worked there, and I don't think he really knew my name until I worked on the album. I was just one of the guys who worked at the Record Plant. He was friendly, but also he wasn't there at the Record Plant to hang around or listen to music. He was there to work. That was an intense period of time for him. It was his return album. Bruce and the E Street Band are real serious. They're not uptight guys, but they are very serious, very hard-workers. When they were working there, at the Record Plant, they were there to work, you know? When they finish working, they don't hang around and joke. It's not like they are there to party. I would say that I got to know the band a little bit.

I was a good friend of Thom Panunzio. We got along pretty

well. He was one of the engineers at that time, and I was one of the engineers. He started a few years before me. And Jimmy Iovine liked me too. When I first met Jimmy, I told him I really liked his work on the *Born to Run* record, and when I first met him, he wasn't a famous record producer yet, he was an engineer. Jimmy liked me and Thom also liked me. They both liked the fact that I was from New Jersey.

During the course of *Darkness*, they did have some very intense times, and at one point, I mean, in the early part of that album, it wasn't called *Darkness*. It was just the new Bruce record and they were working on it. It didn't have a title. I think they all kinda thought that the centerpiece of the album, and in fact the title would be "The Promise." Evidently the album, like many albums, started to take a little longer than everybody thought it would. You know, you get in, you book yourself a month, or two, or three months, and after six months you're still working on something and you're not even halfway done. You start to realize that this is gonna take a lot longer, and the stress of the situation took its toll on everybody.

I know that Thom Panunzio was in a sense the least involved, in that he was the assistant engineer. He didn't have the pressure that Jimmy Iovine, or the band, or Jon Landau had. Thom had some other plans. He thought maybe he would be working with Bruce for maybe three or four months. And that after six months, all is still going and maybe the guy needs a vacation. He never had any time off, and I think it just got to be too much for him, and he finally just started to feel overworked.

At one point Bruce Springsteen came in and he said, "Look . . . ." At that time they'd finished all the recording and they were at the final stage of mixing, like the final stage of the record, but it was going very slowly. Bruce announced that there was "a whole new song going to happen." A new song for the album. This meant that we had to stop the mixing process and go back to set up drums, (the) recording situation, which would take a day or so just to set it up. And they were going to do a whole week of recording.

Bruce doesn't have to say, "Look, we have to stop this, and we have to set this." Bruce just said, "Look, there's another song we're gonna do this next week." Thom said, "Look . . . ." He spoke to whoever, Jimmy or Landau, he said, "I'm gonna take ten days or two weeks," and they asked me to be the assistant, and I was of course pleased to give my help. Of course I knew that it was going to be a high tension situation there, but I'm such a Bruce fan that I was very pleased to actually work with both Bruce and Jimmy Iovine.

So I got chosen. I was the chosen replacement for Thom Panunzio as the assistant engineer, and I spent ten days or two weeks working with them in studio B. What we did during that time was we recorded the basic tracks for the new title cut, "Darkness on the Edge of Town," and we mixed "Racing in the Street." There might have been some additional overdubs. We worked on some other songs, in fact, I remember bringing in some of the Jukes, who were working on another album in another room, and if I'm not mistaken, I helped out when they came in to do some of the background vocals on "Adam Raised a Cain," but basically the two (songs), were the main things.

Did you have any interesting interaction with Bruce during that time?

Bruce was a little short one night. He asked everybody in the control room if they could lend him some money. I said I could. I must have just been paid that day. I had some cash and I didn't even think about it.

Did he pay you back?

(I got) a check, made out to me from Bruce Springsteen. He didn't sign it. I guess it was somebody in his office, but it's a Bruce Springsteen check. It's for $264.75, which is $220 to pay me, and the rest is to cover $14.75 in expenses and the $30 loan to Bruce. It's funny ten or twelve years later, that I lent Bruce 30 bucks.

Any other unusual stories?

A few months earlier, there was a blackout of electricity. Electricity was gone from New York City for 48 hours (July 13-14, 1977). New York City was totally blacked out, no lights. I was working at the Record Plant upstairs, at studio C on the the fourth floor. My tape machine slowed down a little bit. I forget what session it was, but the tape machine slowed down and then it came back up. We could tell there had been a power surge, or failure in the power, a brief failure. We didn't know if it was a problem with our own tape machine, until somebody came in from the room next door and said, "Did your tape machine slow down?" And we said "Yes it did."

The first thing we did was fast forward the 24 track tape out of the machine, so if any more power surges occurred, the tape would be safe anyway. If I'm not mistaken, the light went out again, and then I went to the roof to check. On that famous roof you have a nice view of Manhattan. If you look to the east, you can see mostly just midtown. North you can see Central Park, and if you look west, you can see over to the Hudson River, and then New Jersey. But as I stood there, I saw all the light in New York City go out in three large chunks, three grids as I called them, three power grids. First south, then west of me to midtown, then everything north. I stood there for about ten seconds until "boom," all the light came back on for a moment. I remember Thom Panunzio hearing people on the street at that time boo and moan because they had been momentarily excited about the light coming down, and they were a bit disappointed when the light came back on. So ten seconds later all the lights went out at the same moment, and they stayed out like that for 48 hours.

There we were, stuck on the

10th floor. I do remember that Herb Alpert was working in the next room, in the mix room, and he and his session, and me and my session, we had to walk down ten flights of stairs to the first floor. We obviously didn't know whether the lights would stay out for ten minutes, or a half hour, or three hours or three days. So we all sat around. Bruce and the E Street Band were working in studio B, and everyone in studio B also came out and we all stayed in the lobby at the Record Plant, talking and relaxing.

Some people, Bruce and others, were playing guitars. I think the phone lines were still working. Some phone calls were being made, and after an hour or so, people looked tired and Jimmy Iovine asked me where I'd be staying. I told him I didn't have a place to stay, as my house was in Jersey. I said I could sleep on the couch at the Record Plant, and he said, "Well, come up with me at the hotel. We'll walk up with Bruce and the band, and you can stay in my room."

So we all went outside. Again, this was 1977, Bruce was not as famous as he was a decade later, and he could safely walk in the street. Only the occasional fan would recognize him and come up and speak to him. He could walk in peace. All was dark, and the band was there already. I remember it being a nice night. It was during summertime, but I can't remember the month. I know it was very warm. We took our time walking to uptown. I think some vendors were still selling there. Ice cream. I remember we were taking our time walking on 8th Avenue, and it was kind of unique because it was dark. It was enough light to see, there was the moonlight, and some emergency light from the streets and some stores.

Anyway, I was walking with Jimmy and Bruce and the E Street Band, and we end up at their hotel. It was near Central Park. The lobby, of course, was all dark, and I think Bruce walked up to his room with some members of the band. I had been walking with Clarence holding candles. We were all laughing. It was a funny thing, because we didn't know how long it would last.

We all went to sleep, although I guess Bruce got a ride to Jersey by car from some girlfriend. I don't know her name, but she came and picked him up in a Volkswagon Bug. I remember the following morning Jimmy came down and got me, and he was gonna meet Bruce and he wanted me to go with them. So it was me, Jimmy and Bruce, strolling around Central Park for a couple of hours, maybe three. We mostly walked through the southern area of Central Park. It was an extensive walk, and then we walked in a very nice area of Manhattan, including the Plaza Hotel. All was very relaxed and casual. Lots of stories were told, the electricity was still off. Bruce and Jimmy were mostly talking about the record and I joined them for some comment about it. I was just strolling with them. It's funny looking back on that because now Bruce can't even walk down the street without people trying to talk about him. I mean, in those days he wasn't quite that popular except for people who were Bruce fans.

> "Bruce announced that there was 'a whole new song going to happen.' . . . We recorded the basic tracks for the new title cut, 'Darkness on the Edge of Town.' "

After a couple of hours, I headed back to the Record Plant to see if there was anything that I could do, setting up for my sessions maybe. The lights never came back on that day. It wasn't until later that night that the lights did come back on.

Tell me about working with Jimmy Iovine.

When I first met him, when I first began at the Record Plant, I think that he was pleased by the fact that I knew who he was. It showed that I read album jackets and record credits, and that I was aware of the people making records. It also showed that I was a big Bruce fan and Jimmy was pleased. I liked working with Jimmy. He was an intense worker. When I worked for him originally, he was beginning to be a producer, and I worked with Jimmy and Shelly Yakus on their first major success, which was Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers' *Damn the Torpedoes.*

How was it working with Tom Petty?

I can't speak about much of the playing on that album, *Damn the Torpedoes,* because I was only part of the mixing. I really like Tom and all the guys in the band, but they were there only to listen and judge the mixing, not to play. Tom was there the whole time. We mixed five or six songs together. One of the songs never made it to the record.

What was fun about that is that soon after the record was completed, a couple months later as it was being released, Jimmy, Shelly and I were together working on another album, and the reviews started coming in. One review called it "a classic album," comparing it to the Rolling Stones' *Sticky Fingers* or *Exile on Main Street,* and I just remember Shelly and Jimmy being ecstatic for a day or two, and on the next day they came in with *Billboard* and the album was shooting up the charts. You can't imagine the thrill and also the dollar signs in their eyes. They realized that they were sitting on something big. It was a very exciting thing for me to be a part of.

How would you describe Bruce in comparison with the other musicians

you worked with?

About Bruce I can say that, different from most of the other musicians I worked with, Bruce is a real honest man. Bruce is a dedicated, honest individual. Bruce has a lot of sincerity and honesty. All I can say is even before his image had been projected, he was very concerned about his music, about expressing himself properly in the songs. He's a very hard worker, he's very serious. That's not to say he doesn't smile and he doesn't laugh with the band, but to say that he can surely dominate in the studio sometimes. Generally when the band wants to play around, they go to some clubs, and when they want to work, they come to the studio. Sometimes musicians come to the recording studio when they want to party and have some fun.

But still, I don't want to give the wrong impression. Bruce and I had a professional contract. It was me, him and two or three other people in one room for about 15 days. We worked, we never talked about each other's lives. I don't know Bruce today. He might have changed a little bit, as everyone has, but I feel like he's always the nice guy I met then.

When did you last see him?

It's funny. Last time I saw Bruce was at a Yankee game. I went to a Yankee game in June 1988. I was looking for tickets to the game. It was the early part of the baseball season, against the Boston Red Sox. Suddenly I saw Jon Landau, I thought "that's funny." And I noticed somebody next to him and I said, "Oh my God, it's Bruce." There he was, standing with his shades on, and a beard. Not a full beard, but like he hadn't shaved in a few days. And he wasn't instantly recognizable. Maybe it was the shades or the beard, but no one around noticed him. It was like in a dream. He was invisible. Also getting out of the car was John Scher (New York area promoter), who I also recognized.

I walked over and introduced myself. You know, "Hi. I worked with you on *Darkness* at the Record Plant." And I complimented Jon and Bruce on the latest album, *Tunnel of Love.* I made a comment about some of the good harmonies on "Tougher Than the Rest," during the verses and the middle bridge. I made a quick reference to Bruce about the Everly Brothers' harmony in that song, and got a smile out of Bruce from that one.

But that's the last time I saw him. As a Jersey guy, I was particularly excited working with Bruce. No doubt about it, it was not like working with all the others.

Was Bruce under pressure or was there much tension while he was working on* Darkness*?

He knew that it was a very important part of his career and he was very serious about his work. He knew that he had a big chance, but I wouldn't say he was tense. That's not the exact word. I always remember him as an artist at his peak, doing his best, very seriously. Putting a lot of love into his songs. I saw him dance and laugh. His humor was always there.

What was the role of Steve Van Zandt?

Steven by coincidence, if I remember correctly, was involved in producing a Southside album in the next room. Doing some of the mixing and overdubs. So Steven had a double role: he was helping on the production of *Darkness*, but he was also the lone producer of the Jukes album. So Steven was always going back and forth between the two rooms. I think Steve was there with us when we mixed "Racing in the Street." He was one of the hands on the console. He was very involved.

Describe Bruce in the studio as a singer and as a guitar player.

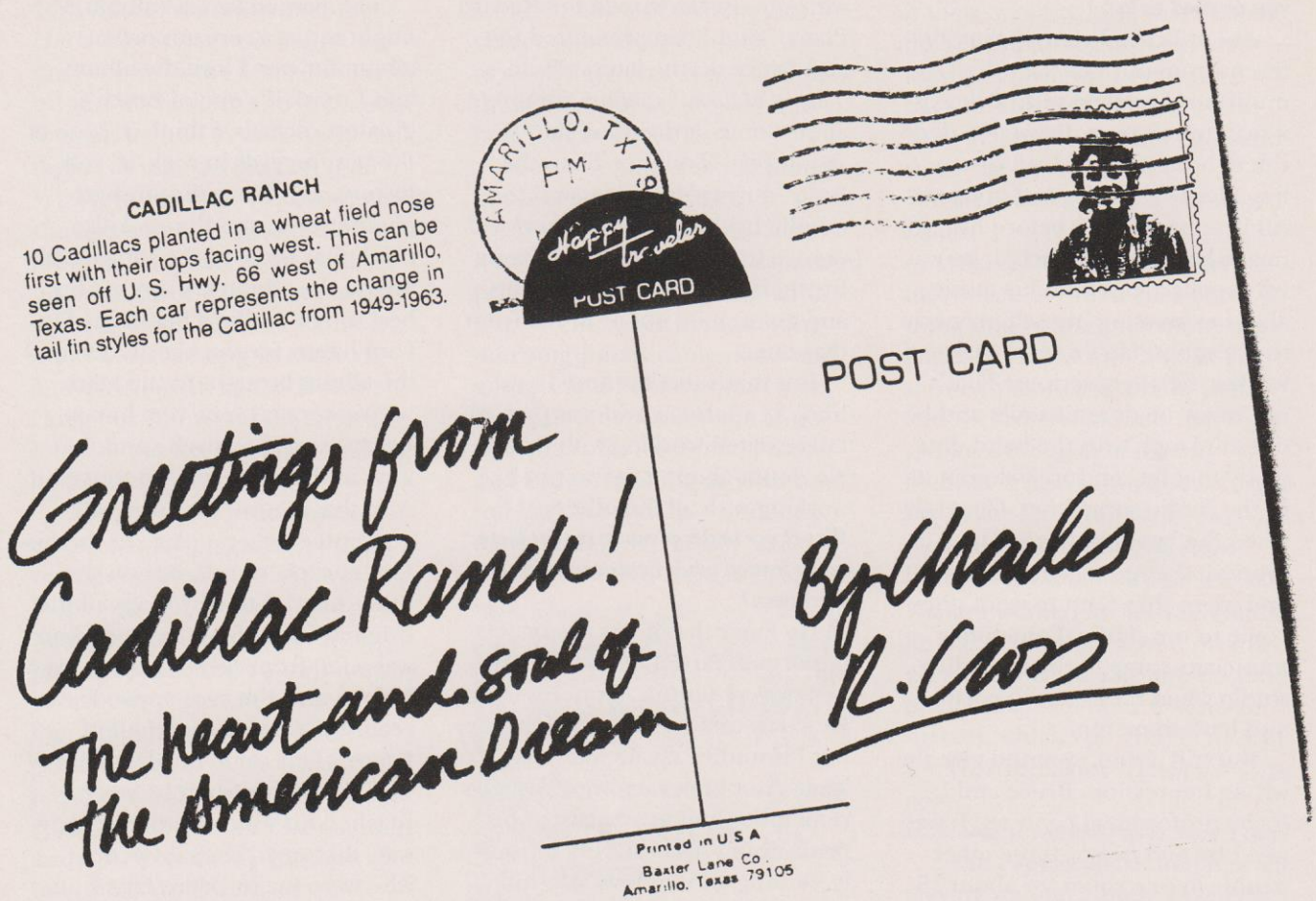
Dynamite. Strong singer. He never had to go back over and over again to get his pitch or his performance. That's something we have to do with some artists. Instead, the only redoing we would do with Bruce was if he wanted to change the feel and the atmosphere of the performance. Same thing with his guitar playing.

Judge Bruce's albums from the eighties.

The *Born in the USA* album, I might say, is a very important album for me. I love the album and I think it's one of Bruce's greatest records. I think it's one of the best records in rock 'n' roll history, and I love the strength and power of the album. I also think that some of the songs that are on the album are among his best songs, and as a big Bruce fan, I am happy for the big success that the album brought to the man.

We were all very, very happy, because we thought he and the guys in the band really deserved it. And that album, I'm sure, will guarantee Bruce a place in the history of rock 'n' roll. But on the other hand, I think for any of the original Bruce fans, anybody who was a fan from *Born to Run* or even before, and I'm sure anybody can realize that more than half of Bruce's fans came on after *Born in the USA.* That's when he really reached his widest audience. Anyway, that small choir of people who were major Bruce fans from before 1984, although we were so happy for his big success, I felt a bit of a loss, and my friends, other Bruce fans, also expressed to each other that feeling, the feeling that we had lost something of our own.

We lost a possession that we had felt a particular bond with. Now Bruce was no longer our special favorite. That material and that man belong to millions of people all over the world. He was everybody's favorite. Although Bruce's songs continued to speak to us in the same way, we lost a little bit of that connection with the guy. And it was hard. I felt that I'd lost the intimacy that I had felt with the E Street Band and Bruce and his music. So it was sort of a fun thing, but also a difficult moment. I will also say that I think the *Tunnel of Love* album is some of Bruce's best work. I find a maturity and he continues to speak to me very personally. And he continues to really hit in my heart some feelings and some thoughts that I thought, after the *Born in the USA* album, would have gone.


CADILLAC RANCH
10 Cadillacs planted in a wheat field nose first with their tops facing west. This can be seen off U. S. Hwy. 66 west of Amarillo, Texas. Each car represents the change in tail fin styles for the Cadillac from 1949-1963.
AMARILLO, TX
Happy Traveler
POST CARD
POST CARD
Greetings from Cadillac Ranch!
The heart and soul of the American Dream
By Charles R. Cross
Printed in U S A
Baxter Lane Co.
Amarillo, Texas 79105

It sits like some strange alien apparition just outside of Amarillo, a few miles off the road that used to be called Route 66. And if that famous highway can be thought of as the mother road on the journey into this nation's psyche, then the Cadillac Ranch is the first exit into the heart and soul of the American dream.

Bruce Springsteen wrote a song about the Ranch and summed up the appeal of the Cadillac as "just like a little bit of heaven here on earth." Art critics have described the Ranch with accolades like "sculpture extraordinaire" and comparisons to England's Stonehenge. Though the Ranch was only created 15 years ago, it is already such a permanent part of the American landscape that a recent piece in *Harper's* cited the three greatest cultural contributions of this nation as "television, rock 'n' roll and the Cadillac Ranch."

This all seems almost comical to Hudson Marquez, one of the artists who created the Ranch back in May of 1974. At the time Marquez was a member of an eccentric collective of artists known as Ant Farm. Based in San Francisco, Marquez and his ant partners (Chip Lord and Doug Michels) were the Merry Pranksters of the art community. They did stuff like drive cars into television sets and call it "art." But when they came up with the piece of art that became Cadillac Ranch, little did anyone know what a lasting and powerful impression this piece would have on the world.

"Cadillac Ranch has gone far beyond being just a piece of art," Marquez said recently over lunch in Seattle. He now works on the production of films and was in the Northwest for Cameron Crowe's new movie *Singles*. "I was in a bar recently in this really remote part of Yugoslavia," he continues. "Even *there* the people in the bar knew what Cadillac Ranch was."

Describing the Ranch in physical terms is easy: The Cadillac Ranch is an installation of ten Cadillacs planted with their hoods in the ground and their tails sticking in the air. The Cadillacs are set in a row and positioned in chronological order from an early 1949 model through to a 1964 version. The cars document the rise and fall of the tailfin as a mythic piece of auto architecture.

Explaining how the piece affects the viewer, how it is to be *used*, is another matter altogether. You look at it. You scratch your head. You take pictures of it (the Ranch is featured on the inner sleeve of *The River* album cover). You scratch your name into it (thousands of lovers over the years have signified their love by scrawls on the sides of the cars). Or you simply ponder the significance of the cars. The Ranch is best appreciated when viewed by car, which is how most people in America look at everything in this nation: From the freeway going someplace else.

This piece of art does not come with an instruction

manual. Some people consider the cars to be little more than junk, while others consider Cadillac Ranch as one of the most powerful pieces of conceptual art ever created. What it does, in almost every instance, is to make the viewer *think*. And in this world of blind faith, thinking can be a very transforming process.

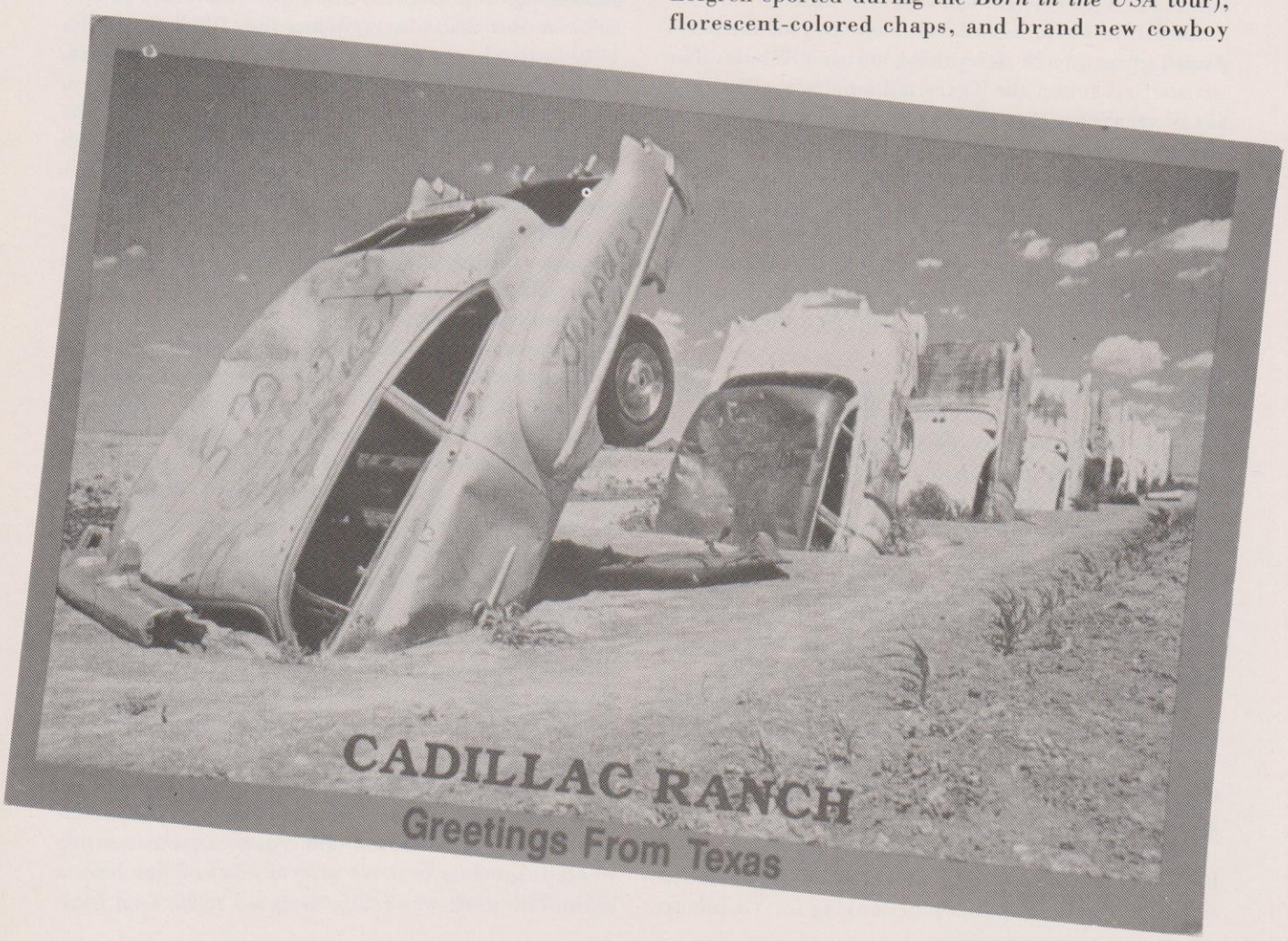
"People have a hard time understanding how someone would do this sort of thing as art," Marquez says in way of explanation. "It was meant to sum up the disposability of American culture. At least that's what I'd say today—tomorrow I may have different explanation. The members of Ant Farm used to give a completely different answer every time they were asked what the Cadillac Ranch is about, just to confuse people. And that's how it should be."

Springsteen was inspired enough by the Ranch to write a song about it, and over the years the tune has become one of his concert staples. But even Springsteen's anthem kept some of the mystery intact, using the Ranch as both a metaphor for the place you meet James Dean, Junior Johnson and Burt Reynolds, and then in the last verse, as the Ranch you retire to when love fails.

The inspiration for the Cadillac Ranch came out of a sort of love, a love of the automobile as metaphor for American culture. And when it comes to American automobiles, the Cadillac has always been the grande dame. "The Cadillac is the white trash symbol for making it in America," Marquez explains. "It's supposed to be the world's best car but everyone knows that's horseshit. Just see how much money you get for one when it's used. It's a joke on Texas ultimately, and the whole eccentric attitude they have towards cars, Cadillacs in particular. It's like 'Oops, the ashtray's full. Let's pull over and get us a new one.'"

The Texas attitude is both exemplified and mocked by Stanley Marsh 3, the millionaire who financed the Ranch and on whose land it rests. Marsh is one of those Texans they make television sitcoms about: He's got so much money he almost busts a vein just trying to think of ways to spend it all. In Marsh's case, the way he most enjoys spending his wealth is by creating practical jokes. When he was named to the Nixon enemies list, he sent out press releases and threw a gigantic party. The Cadillac Ranch is but one of the many strange projects Marsh has surrounded himself with. His ranch also features a portable land pool table complete with four foot high balls and 20 foot pool cues.

Just for a hoot, Stanley Marsh 3 is capable of doing almost anything. One of his more famous stunts was flying fresh manure to Washington D.C. for John Connally's trial. Once in D.C., Marsh and his cohorts then donned oversized cowboy hats (like the one Nils Lofgren sported during the *Born in the USA* tour), florescent-colored chaps, and brand new cowboy



boots. Next they rubbed the manure over their boots and walked into the courtroom followed by swarms of flies. Inside they made a major ruckus as they yelled to Connally "John, we've come from Texas to help y'all out."

If you look up the word "eccentric" in the dictionary, you'll find a picture of Marsh. Marquez revels in describing Marsh's personal letterhead, which is three feet wide, printed on super expensive linen stock and simply reads "Top Floor" of the office building Marsh occupies, the tallest building in the Texas panhandle. If the Cadillac Ranch is considered the epoch of that which is weird, it took the combination of Marsh's Texas weirdness, and the Ant Farm's San Francisco boho weirdness to create something as mythically weird as the Cadillac Ranch. Suffice it to say that the world of white trash Cadillacs was one that Stanley Marsh 3 found joy in lampooning.

Cadillacs first came into Marquez's world when he was growing up in New Orleans. In this poor southern city, this car was a symbol for the promise of wealth and fame. He remembers seeing Fats Domino driving around New Orleans in a great big Cadillac with a white chauffeur, and Fats was always in the newest model. "I remember those tailfins were unbelievable," Marquez says. "When I was a kid Cadillacs were something you could only dream about owning. They were a currency of wealth and the most obvious status symbol in a poor neighborhood."

Both Ant Farm and Marsh have over of the years found great joy in debunking status symbols. The artists first found the Texas millionaire's name on a list of eccentrics that were known to donate to liberal causes. They wrote him with some ideas for art projects, and he wrote back on that glorious letterhead. "I like Ant Farm," Marsh was quoted as saying in a 1976 book called *Autoamerica* by Ant Farmer Chip Lord. "It is a wholesome group. If you would like do to something here on my ranch, well, just make a proposal. If I like it, we will do it!" And do it they did.

The original idea was to create a fake package of seeds that instead of picturing, say, turnips, showed Cadillacs growing out of the ground. The packages would be designed and produced to look exactly like legitimate seed packets and then they would be surreptitiously placed in feed stores and granges in the panhandle. The desired result was for people to stumble upon these and say "Jeez, what the hell? You can just grow Cadillacs?" It would have required a lot of money and effort for a quiet and small joke.

But Marsh wanted a bigger bang and he suggested planting actual Cadillacs rather than Cadillac seeds. And with that vision, and an original sketch done for the seed packet showing cars growing out of the ground, the idea of Cadillac Ranch was born.

With Marsh's considerable financial resources behind them, the members of Ant Farm found themselves in the Texas panhandle looking for Cadillacs. "It was like a sweepstakes," says Marquez. "It was someone saying, 'Here's some money. Go out and buy cars.'" An ad appeared in the local newspaper, which started people talking, and the hunt was on. Ant Farm arrived in Texas at the beginning of May of 1974 and by the end of that month the Texans would never forget their visit.

The artists got some help from the local Cadillac dealership who allowed them unlimited access to their records. Looking at these archives gave Marquez and his partners even more evidence that they were on to something: Many of the cars had been paid for with cash, a clear sign they were bought the day someone hit it big. Some of the Cadillacs had been paid for with points in oil wells, and a few were even purchased on promises of points in oil wells that hadn't even been drilled. Like much of America, Amarillo's dream cars had been bought on dreams themselves.

With their long hair and beards and fistfuls of cash, the hippie members of Ant Farm looked like visions of the apocalypse to the conservative stodgy Texans. The artists drove around the panhandle and would slam on their brakes whenever they saw a Cadillac sitting in a farmer's field. They were able to buy most of the cars for under $200 as running condition really didn't matter.

Because the artists wanted every major tailfin design represented, finding certain years proved to be harder than others. When they finally located a 1949 fastback, the owner refused to take anything less than $700 for the car, since he said it ran like a dream. Marsh was insulted and outraged at his refusal to bargain, so he directed the artists to buy the car and then smash the front end to bits with sledgehammers in front of the previous owner. As Lord wrote in *Autoamerica*, "So we did smash it with the cameras rolling as the bewildered owner winced in agony. Then we drove off to bury it and it was one of the first in the ground."

Planting the cars in the ground caused a logistical problem until the artists realized they could just dig a hole and then drive the cars into the pit. A puzzled backhoe operator was employed who methodically dug holes only to watch the artists fill them with Cadillacs. Once each car was in the hole, a crane held it aloft while cement was poured around the vehicle. "Those cars aren't coming out," Marquez says with a slight hint of glee. "Those muthafuckers are in there." The crew could only install a couple of cars a day so the whole installation took a week. One car was destroyed during installation but a spare car saved the day.

The site for the Ranch was chosen because it was close to the former Route 66 (which is now Interstate 40), and it was perfect for viewing from the freeway. "The site made sense," Marquez says, "because it wasn't near an exit and would require anyone wanting to see it up close to drive several miles off the beaten path. The work was really designed to be seen from

Ant Farm (from left to right): Hudson Marquez, Roger Dainton, Stanley Marsh 3, Doug Michels, Chip Lord.

the freeway, driving by at 60 miles per hour. We were really into roadside attractions at the time." One other site, in the inner city near a housing project, was considered but abandoned when the artists decided an inner city location might lead some to interpret the work as a political statement.

As it is, the Cadillac Ranch springs from out of nowhere. Marquez says the ultimate goal was for people to drive by that knew nothing about it and go "what the hell was that? Were those Cadillacs they were growing back there?" Though some occasional tourists probably still are shocked the first time they see the Ranch, its popularity as a cultural icon has limited the surprise value.

The good people of Amarillo we always ready for surprises from Stanley Marsh 3 but nothing could have prepared them for the Cadillac Ranch. Even before the Ranch was constructed, rumors were rampant in the panhandle, particularly after people saw that Marsh was advertising in the newspaper for used Cadillacs. Some local residents thought the cars were to be used by Evil Knievel who would jump over them. Elvis just happened to be playing in Amarillo during the time the Ranch was being constructed and a rumor started that the cars were to be props in an upcoming Elvis movie.

When the Ranch was completed Stanley Marsh 3 threw one of the biggest parties in Texas and invited the world. He took particular chagrin in inviting all the society matrons of Amarillo and watching them try to negotiate the pasture in their high heels and dresses. "He invited all the gossips from the town," Marquez says. "So out there next to these planted Cadillacs were all these Texas ladies with big hair and five inch heels. They were all out in this wet field looking at this thing trying to figure out just what in hell it was, and most of them were too polite to ask. Some people thought it was a grave."

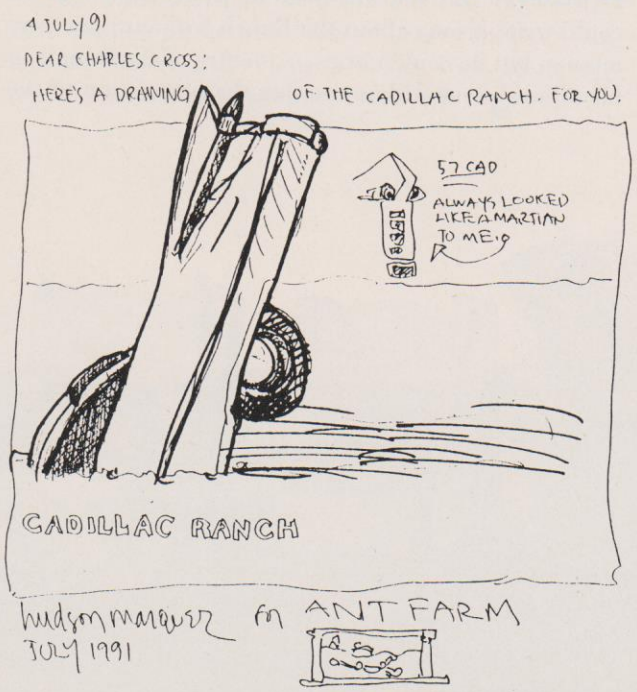
Marquez says that prior to the public unveiling, he spent some quiet time alone with the cars pondering the work that he'd created. "I know some artists think their work is so important it's on the same level as a cure for cancer," he says. "I know that's crap. I'd never be as pretentious as that.

"Still when I walked around those cars that day," he continues, "I knew that what we'd done was really good. You try all your life to do something that's 100 percent right and you never achieve that. But this was up there, this was 90 percent." Marquez says at that point he decided that he didn't want to repeat the idea since he could see that it would spawn imitation. "I just decided then and there that I didn't want to get trapped burying cars for the rest of the my life."

The Cadillac Ranch became part of America on May 28, 1974, the day the first car was driven into the ground. And like all parts of America, it became a creature of the media, written about in dozens of newspapers and magazines and reported on television news. Charles Kuralt covered it for CBS TV and soon the Ranch was known far and wide, even as far as Yugoslavia. It was the perfect item for television and for what Marquez calls the "soft bookends" that television programmers use to wrap around their news. "Coming up, a man in Texas who buried ten Cadillacs," the announcers announced. *People* magazine called it "the American Stonehenge."

Even Marquez admits he's puzzled to explain the tremendous interest the Ranch has generated over the years. "It struck a nerve with a lot of people," he says. "Anyone can read something into it. I've heard all sorts of theories that this work is concurrent with the death of the American car or the death of American culture or all sorts of other junk. This is just a bunch of cars!"

As if the Ranch needed any more publicity, it got even more media coverage when word leaked out that Bruce Springsteen had written a song about it. Springsteen had first visited the Ranch during his 1974 tour of Texas not too long after the Ranch was constructed. The ranch was the perfect icon for a songwriter whose fascination with the American


4 JULY 91
DEAR CHARLES CROSS:
HERE'S A DRAWING OF THE CADILLAC RANCH. FOR YOU.
57 CAD
ALWAYS LOOKED LIKE A MARTIAN TO ME.
CADILLAC RANCH
hudson marquez for ANT FARM
JULY 1991

dream machine dominates much of his work. Pictures of Springsteen visiting the Ranch and climbing on the cars, probably taken during the late '70s, appear in the oversized *Born in the USA* tourbook.

How Bruce Springsteen came to write a song about the Cadillac Ranch is perhaps best told by Miami Steve Van Zandt who met Marquez in the early '80s and told him the whole saga (Marquez's wife was working at the time as Van Zandt's publicist). Van Zandt told Marquez the story of the band driving through Texas on their bus: "Everyone was asleep except Bruce and the bus driver," he told Marquez. "Bruce was sitting up front with the driver. It was very early in the morning and suddenly the bus came upon the Cadillac Ranch. Bruce made the driver pull over and he woke everyone up and made them go out into the field." Van Zandt said the band members weren't thrilled at being awaken in the early hours of the dawn to tramp through a pasture filled with old Cadillacs, but the moment was memorable. Not too long after that, Bruce wrote the song "Cadillac Ranch" and it appeared on *The River* album in 1980. Springsteen has made the song one of his concert standards and has performed it on every tour since.

The Cadillac Ranch played at least a partial role in the delay in the release of *The River*. Like all of Springsteen's records during the past 15 years, that album was highly awaited by both the public and the record company. When recording was finally completed the record was rushed into production. The designer of the record jacket realized at the last minute that permission had not been granted by the Ranch's artists to use the image on the album cover, though the jacket had already been designed and sent to the printers. As "Ant Farm," Marquez and his partners own the copyright on the commercial use of the image of the Ranch and they have vigorously protected their rights over the years. As such, Bruce Springsteen could write a song about the Ranch without their permission but he could not use a picture of the Ranch on his album cover without getting the permission of the artists.

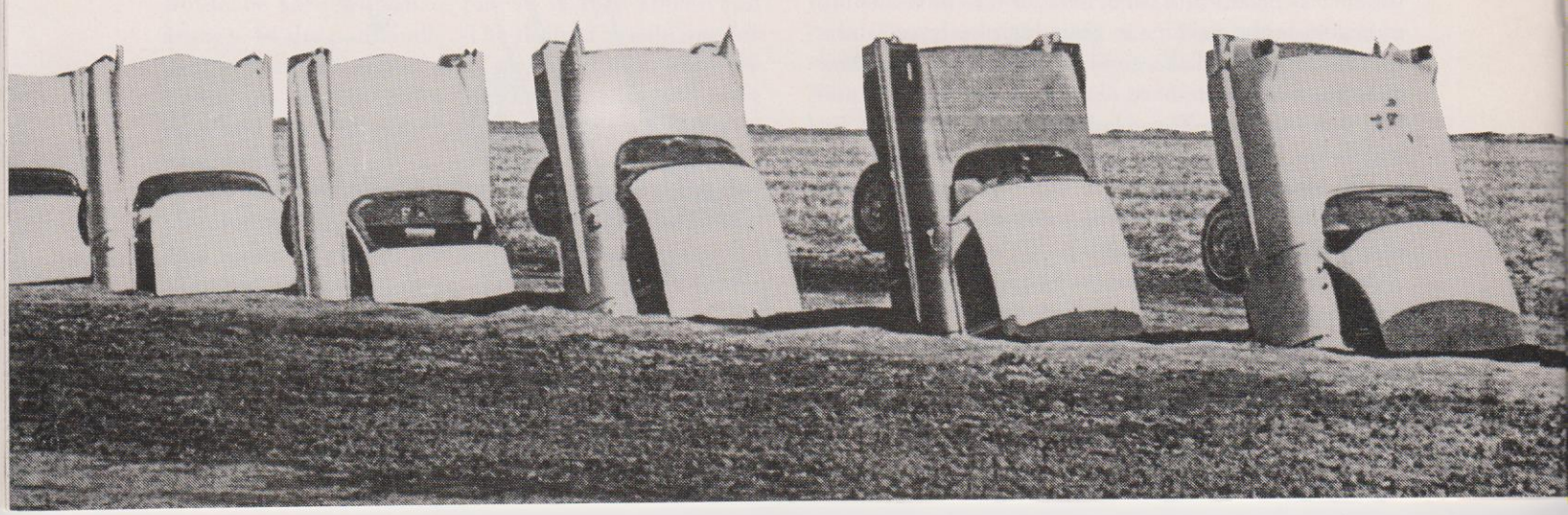
Marquez says when he was contacted by the album designer, the fact that the album had already been designed without his permission caused him some concern that his copyright was being infringed. He began negotiations with CBS and Springsteen's lawyers. During a tense two week period the album was delayed until a compromise could be struck and permission was granted. Marquez says he and his partners only asked for $600, a hundred copies of the album and full credit on the sleeve. The album cover was credited properly and the project was printed.

"What we really wanted was credit," explains Marquez. "I think the CBS lawyers were shocked when we told them we only wanted $600 because they knew we had them over a barrel. But what we wanted was acknowledgement more than anything else. We put a lot of work into this piece and it's only proper that we get credit."

The negotiations over the copyright to the image of the Ranch may have had a larger effect on the marketing plans for *The River* than the credit on the picture indicates. Sometime during the few weeks prior to the record's release, "Held Up (Without a Gun)" was dropped from the album in a last minute decision ("Be True" was also dropped late in the game).

As part of the agreement over the use of the image of the Ranch on the album jacket, Ant Farm asked that the Ranch not be used in any other promotional posters, picture sleeves or ad campaigns since they felt CBS had already shown an insensitivity to their copyright. Though the album designer agreed, Marquez says he got the feeling from the designer that the image had been planned for use on other promotional material. "There was something afoot," he says, "but they never asked us permission for anything else and we made clear they couldn't use the Cadillac Ranch without getting our permission. We did not want the Ranch's image co-opted without our permission or control."

There have been some suggestions over the years that *The River* might have been a larger success for



Springsteen had another single been released after "Fade Away" faded off the charts. Some consideration was given at the time to a release of "Cadillac Ranch" as the third or fourth single from the album. The song was never released as a single in the U.S., though it was released in several other countries including England. Even in England the image used on the picture sleeve is of the Cadillac grillwork, and not a picture of the Cadillac Ranch.

Bruce Springsteen is not the only musician to write about the Texas landmark. Moon Martin wrote a song called "Cadillac Walk" and told Marquez it was inspired by the Ranch. In recent years the Ranch has been used in numerous commercials, including one from Lincoln Mercury that was filmed with the artist's permission. The Lincoln ad touted that Lincolns were America's best car. "Unlike other luxury cars, we're built to last," it said.

Marquez says he and his partners are frequently contacted by bands who want to shoot music videos featuring the Ranch. So far the artists have yet to grant permission because the bands asking, according to Marquez, "are all awful bands like Chicago." He cites the Seattle group Tad, featuring a 300 pound lead singer, as the sort of group he'd encourage to film a video at the Ranch, perhaps even waiving copyright fees.

The decay suggested by the Lincoln Mercury ad is only furthered by the current state of the cars, which look like Tad has sat on them, Marquez says. Though the wheels have been welded on, most of the other parts of the cars have been bent or damaged by vandals. Furthermore the finish on the cars has been destroyed by graffiti, and even though Marsh repaints the vehicles each year, they are perennially covered with spray paint messages. "It's an honor that people deface it," Marquez says, "because that says as much about America as anything else. People have scratched all sorts of things into those cars and I can't believe how trashed they are. But ultimately that's part of the work. We wanted to make sure the cars were accessible and that they weren't locked away in some museum."

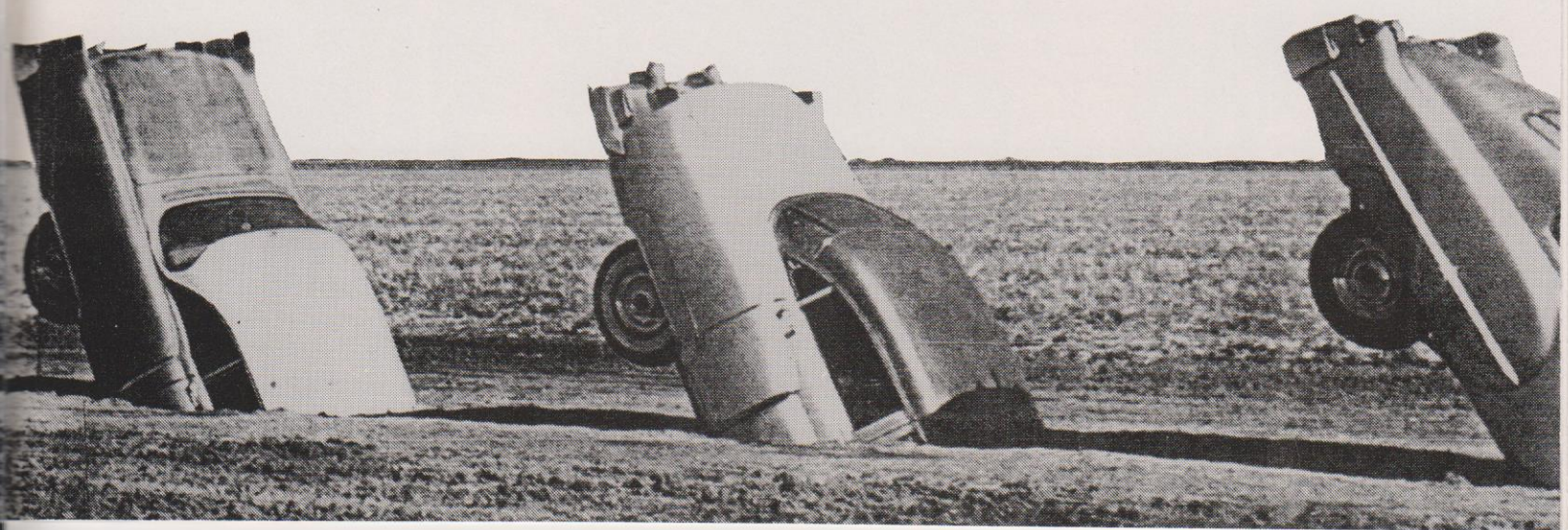
A few years back some zealous fan had used each car to spell out most of the letters of the name of the band Meat Puppets (the final car got both the "t" and the "s"). Marquez describes how a woman in the music industry in Los Angeles went out of her way to make sure he knew the band themselves had nothing to do with the defacement. "She was very concerned that I might think the Meat Puppets had done this," he says laughing. "But I told her that I hoped they had done it because that would prove they had some balls."

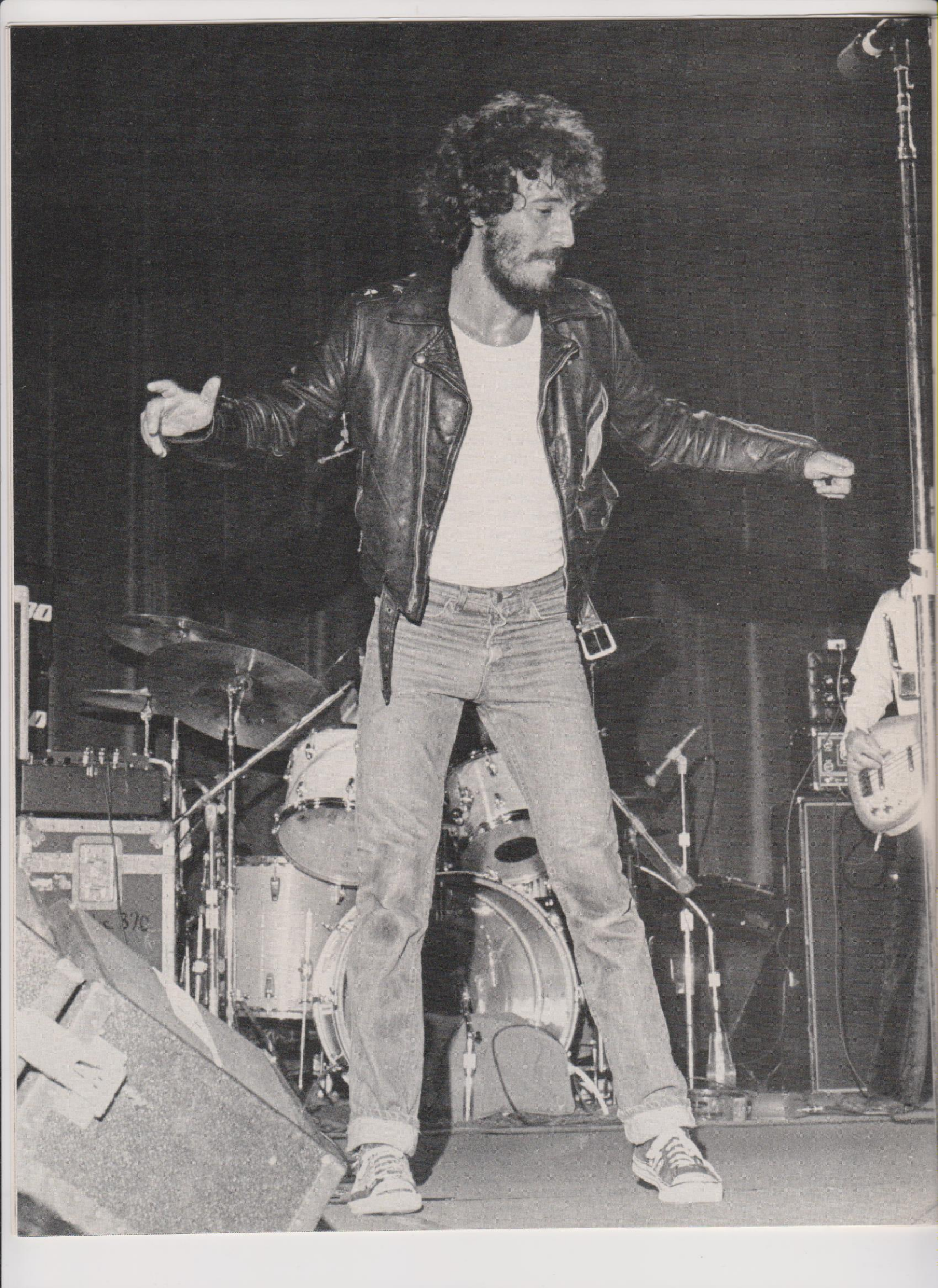
Less than two decades after it was built by some stoned San Francisco hippies and a nutty Texas millionaire, the Cadillac Ranch is as much a part of America as Graceland or Plymouth Rock or the Alamo. Marquez says that local kids now use it as a place to make out. "I think I consider it the ultimate compliment that kids go there on prom night to try to fuck their girlfriends."

If that make-out status isn't enough, Marquez says Rand McNally recently added the Cadillac Ranch to their map of America. "On their map they added it as this little red icon with no explanation. Usually they use that little red symbol to note a park or a school or some kind of natural phenomenon. But there's no explanation here, just a little icon and the name 'Cadillac Ranch.' I guess even Rand McNally doesn't feel a need to explain the Cadillac Ranch."

Though Marquez once buried ten Cadillacs in the Texas dirt, he still drives a Cadillac. His is a 1979 Seville with no tailfins. He thinks the Seville is comfortable and when bought used, it is entirely affordable. "It's the perfect car for Los Angeles," he says. "It's a big hunk of metal with air conditioning but in a place like Los Angeles you want a chunk of metal around you."

And while Marquez tools around Los Angeles is a 1979 version of the white trash dream car, ten Cadillacs are mooning the Gods in Texas. God, like everyone else, doesn't know what to make of it.





CASING ★★★ the ★★★ PROMISED LAND

Go Back in Time to 1975 on a Hot, Sweaty Day in Arizona when Journalist Bart Bull took Bruce Springsteen to the State Fair

Could you think of a better place to spend a day with Bruce Springsteen than at a carnival? In November of 1975, following five months of touring and interviews in support of *Born to Run,* that's exactly where you could find Bruce and Miami Steve, at the Arizona State Fair, relaxing on a rare night off.

Bruce was in the middle of a three show stand in Phoenix, one of the first cities west of the Rockies where Springsteen found major acceptance. The shows were Springsteen's biggest paying concerts to date, thanks in part to an arrangement by Mike Appel to promote the shows themselves. When the band rolled into most cities on the *Born to Run* tour, they might take home three or four thousand dollars, but these three shows in Phoenix brought the band nearly $40,000.

Journalist Bart Bull was assigned to write a story on Springsteen in Arizona for the now defunct magazine *Sounds,* a Phoenix tabloid. He spent the better part of two days following Springsteen around, and his resulting story reads more like a camcorder home video than an interview. Bull captures a candid side of Springsteen rarely seen at any point of his career. The story itself was only seen by a few readers since *Sounds* couldn't make a go of it and folded.

Rather than interview Springsteen directly, Bull tells his story by recording how Bruce interacts with the people around him and describing the scene from a "fly on the wall" perspective.

In Springsteen's comments you'll hear some of the pressure of months of interviews and hype accusations starting to get to him. The shows in Phoenix were the end of the west coast tour, just prior to shows in Florida before the European tour. Also documented is an appearance by manager Mike Appel who tries to convice Springsteen to fly to Hollywood on what would be a few days off between dates, to meet with film producer Dino De Laurentis. Bruce was being considered for a part in the film *King of the Gypsies,* though as Bull so clearly captures, Appel's interest in the project is not shared by Springsteen.

Bull's writing has appeared in numerous magazines and newspapers and he's worked as an editor for both *Spin* and *Details.* This piece for *Sounds* was one of his first major pieces of journalism, and as such reflects the style of a young writer. Still, the enthusiasm of this article from 16 years ago captures what it was like to follow Bruce Springsteen around at a point in his history when energy and activity surrounded him.

by **Bart Bull**

PHIL CECCOLA PHOTO

The language and perspective that Bull captured here provide a virtual time machine back to November 1975. So buy some cotton candy, don't get taken by the barkers and join Miami Steve and Bruce Springsteen at the State Fair.

★ ★ ★

Hey! Hey, where ya guys from?" This grizzled old carny, this guy behind the counter of the toss-a-dart-and-win-a-poster joint, with his face so full of steel grey whiskers you could sand a rough-cut pine plank smooth on them, he's looking across the counter at these young hotshots, two of them with earrings in their left ears and both of 'em acting like they never saw a poster booth like this one here in all their whole lives. "Where ya guys from?"

"New Jersey," the slick one says, the one in the powder blue suit and straw panama with the matching blue hatband.

"Hey, he-e-ey, compadre!" says Whiskers, stroking his red-veined protrusion of a nose in delight. "Me too! What city?"

"Asbury Park," rasps the one in the blue workshirt and stiff unwashed new Levi's. His voice and the carny's are marvelous matches in their chainbeaten roughness and in their equal shares of the dense Jersey patois. "The Pride of. . ." mumbles the kid with a blond ponytail who is leaning on the edge of the counter watching Bruce Springsteen. Asbury Park's favorite son, stretch over the counter and direct his dart at the poster he calls "the California one," a black-and-white beach scene featuring a young man in a bathing suit looking down at the tide spreading toward his feet.

"Hey," Whiskers grins, buffing his nose to a glossy sheen, "I'm from Union City."

"Awright," Miami Steve says, distracted, still astonished at discovering that all you've got to do to win a poster is throw a dart and hit it, even though all the posters are within an easy arm's reach. He has a suspicious, preoccupied grin, like a child who has been handed the key to the candy store and is waiting to be let in on the inevitable catch. He puts down his stuffed snake in order to shake the gnarled mitt Whiskers is extending in his direction, then he reaches up and pulls his panama low onto his brow and begins sizing up the posters plastered in front of him. Whiskers wets his thumb for traction on the slick surface of Bruce's California poster, then spins it into a tight tube and hands it over. Bruce grabs it and, waving it around him as though trying to ward off airborne aggressors, walks off into the glare of the Flying Bobs, as the sound system pumps out "Duke, Duke, Duke of Earl."

★ ★ ★

It's Wednesday, there's no show tonight and Bruce and his lead guitarist Miami Steve Van Zandt, and Don, the band's road manager, are at the Arizona State Fair looking for something to do, looking to unwind a little. Bruce was a bit disappointed at just two encores at last night's show, and now this Hollywood business. It's getting to be a real drag. "They got me going to California Thursday after the show," he tells the blond kid, "to meet some guy and then talk to him." Striding down the midway, walking his tough punk walk, a walk that fits him right in with all the other tough punks cruising the carnival, he is distinguished only by his pensive look and by the fact that there is a photographer with curly red-hair scrambling to get shots of this particular punk at the fair.

It's a slow and rainy weeknight in the final days of the fair, the asphalt aisles are wet and empty, and the carnies aren't pushing the goods the way they would if there was a crowd around. Besides, Springsteen and Don and Miami Steve — Bruce never calls him Steve or even just Miami, it's always MI-ami Ste-e-e-eve — are easy marks. Miami Steve even falls for the one where you try to toss ping-pong balls into glass ashtrays as they swirl around a wading pool.

A genuine sucker's shot, one that nobody ever wins, except maybe that lantern-jawed cowboy over there, the one with larceny in mind who's looking surreptitiously from side to side, waiting until the carnies aren't watching, then leaning way, way, way over and . . . ever . . . so . . . gently . . . gently . . . dropping . . . Damn!. But eventually he manages to slip one in and the carnies grab a big stuffed Saint Bernard and toss it back and forth to each other, chanting "Anothah winnah! Anothah winnah!" and Tex is grinning so hard it looks like he actually believes he won it, like he truly believes he slipped it past them, like the carnies never even noticed. While they're yelling and tossing his dog around, ol' Tex keeps up a steady pumping motion of his elbow right into the ribs of his girlfriend so as to focus her attention properly on his moment of triumph.

Miami Steve notices all this action — or at least the last part, anyway — and figures this one has got to be his game. If a dope like Tex can win a dog, a bright guy like himself could maybe end up owning the whole concession. He plunks down his buck, gets his dozen ping-pong balls — the sheer number of balls ought to be a tip-off — and begins tossing. The frustration of watching the balls hit the ashtrays dead exact center and then bounce happily right back out again gets to him quick. He slips over to the kid in the ponytail, gets him to sneak him some of the balls that are rolling around beneath the counter. The ploy nets him a couple of extra ping-pong balls but no winners. He strikes out. Less dejected than amazed at his lack of success, he hustles to catch up with Bruce, who's on his way to the screen machines.

They start with a duck-hunting machine, then move over to Anti-Aircraft, two gunners trying to shoot down planes as they jet across the screen to the sound of engines roaring and calamitous explosions. "We got it — this is our machine," chortles Miami Steve. "This is our machine, Boss!" The Boss is leaning back grim-lipped, trying to gun down the jet that just snuck by all that Miami Steve enthusiasm. Behind them, the game-trailer attendant is eyeing them impatiently and the instant the last plane goes down with a stuttering buzz, he lowers the trailer's siding. Bruce and Miami Steve are searching their pockets for more quarters, oblivious, but when the carny lowers the siding right on top of them, Miami Steve stage-whispers "Hey, I think they're trying to give us a message," and everyone starts looking for the way out. The carnival lights are going out.

Winding their way around the fairgrounds, on the lookout for some way out of here, they split into two groups.

Up front, the redhead photographer and Miami Steve are engaged in a philosophical dispute at a volume level on the borderline between discussion and armed combat; Springsteen, Don, and the kid in the blond ponytail lag behind. " I OD'd on interviews," Springsteen is saying, scuffing his boot at an empty popcorn box. "Everybody wants to spend all their time talkin' about what we're doin'. All I want to do is do it, but it's getting harder and harder." His speaking voice is somehow identical to the pained Brandoesque voice on his records. It would sound affected if it didn't come so easily. Maybe it was an affectation back in some dim and insecure adolescence, when a skinny kid from Jersey first tried it on in front of his friends, like a new leather jacket, unstained and without rips. Now, all thoroughly broken-in, nothing could sound more natural.

★ ★ ★

The two small groups pass by a flag-draped stage where "Poncie Pone — TV's favorite Hawaiian cabdriver" had appeared with his Royal Hawaiian Revue only a short while earlier. Outside the farm exhibition hall there is a wooden box painted to resemble an old-fashioned red barn, with a glass showcase in front. On the other side of the glass resides a chicken, a hen who will, if a dime is shoved in the slot, take a few random pecks at the toy piano inside the barn. Miami Steve spies Henrietta the Musical Chicken and looks over his shoulder to where Bruce is walking. "Hey," he shouts, "Here's one of them chickens."

Bruce adjusts his hands-in-pockets scuffling to swing by the chicken's cage. He passes within a few feet, looking hard, looking intently, but not stopping long enough to stick a dime in. "Those poor chickens. They ought to . . . in Jersey it's against the law to do that." He jams his hands into his pockets even harder, then begins to mumble to himself. Suddenly, looking up at Don, he says "I don't think I wanna go. Mike keeps telling me I gotta go, but I'll just get on some plane and go there and meet this guy and then get back on another plane. I don't think I'm gonna go." His boot heels are dragging across the fairgrounds.

"Okay with me," says Don affably. "You're the Boss." The exit Miami Steve has been leading them to is locked, so they detour through the flood-lit cattle barn, across fresh-swept floors smelling slightly of manure and sweet hay.

Hands in his pockets, shoulders hunched high, Springsteen broods, slowing only to look sideways at a big heifer who grunts as the Boss passes by. A guard lets them out a gate and they converge on the nearly empty lot where the car is parked. The discussion Miami Steve is having with the photographer has reached new and louder levels of convolution and Don has gone over to supply some reinforcement for Miami

Born to Run wasn't a concept album. See when I write a song, I look at a theme, and then, maybe, I write another one, on the same theme, but a different side.

Steve, who is punctuating an important point by prodding the photographer with a stuffed snake. The kid in the ponytail says something to Springsteen about a hype. "Like I said, I OD'd on publicity. I mean, I like it, I like to talk to people about my music, but it's getting to be so much, you know? I mean, after a while, the only people who read what a writer's got to say is other writers."

"But aren't you a writer?" the kid asks.

"Yeah, but what I'm doin' . . . it's like I'm here and that's all you can say. I'm doin' what I want — I mean, all I ever wanted to do was make records, have a band like this. I don't want all this other stuff, ya know?" His hands, which had been pulled from his pockets to illustrate his intentions, are jammed back in, and he rocks back and forth on the heels of his boots. The kid persists. "But you're a writer too. It's not like you just went out and picked up the guitar and started singing. It's not like you never read anything . . . "

"Nah," Bruce cuts in, "I never read that much. Just enough to get the concepts, the framework, ya know? There isn't anybody, any names I could tell ya I dig, just some things. But I never really read that much, except in high school when they made me. I listened to records — that's where I learned, man."

The kid is having a hard time accepting that. "You mean you don't pay attention to the reviews, you don't . . . "

Bruce cuts in again. "Nah, man, I mean there's no way — if a kid hears an album he likes, he's gonna go get it. If he likes it a lot, he's gonna go grab his friends and make them listen to it, or go to the show and if it hits 'em, they're gonna buy it. I mean, they probably read the reviews some, that's what they're there for, really, so you can find out what's goin' on, but you can get into that stuff too much and then it slows you down, you can't do anything because you're afraid that somebody isn't going to like it. All that really matters is if people listen and like it. If they have a good time, that's all, that's it. I feel like, who cares man, all these people talkin'. I'm just trying to let it pass over me. I'm me, you know? People are gonna do what they're gonna do anyhow. I can't stop 'em, but I ain't gonna try."

While he's been talking, a father and his family have all loaded into their Chevy Impala. The dad puts the key in and starts it, but then he sees something, gets out and comes around back where Bruce and the kid are. He bends over and pulls a cardboard sign — parking $1.50 — from his bumper where the attendant has abandoned it. Dad looks the place over, adjusts his suit, then walks over to the bearded guy with the earring, and in his best man-of-authority Dad-tone says "Here you go — don't you want this?" He hands Bruce the sign. Miami Steve and Don are over at the rental car, trying to rouse somebody name Saddhu from a deep sleep in the front seat. "Saddhu! Get up! Time to go,

Saddhu!" Springsteen stares a moment at the sign he's holding, and lets it fall to the ground, then steps over it.

By the next afternoon Saddhu seems to have at least partially regained consciousness. Miami Steve introduces him at poolside to a reporter in a blinding orange aloha shirt as "our cosmic advisor," and he looks the part. Saddhu is stretched out in the Chamber-of-Commerce-pleasing November sun, and if the rosy hue of his skin is any indicator, he has already absorbed more than his share of solar energy. Cosmic Advisor to Bruce Springsteen's E Street Band indeed. He's wearing one of the Speedo bathing suits which seem to be the poolside uniform for all E Street Band members and roadies, and his hair is slicked-back and blond, like a heavy in an early-Sixties hot rod movie. He appears to have fleshtone Clearasil rubbed all over his nose, as well as some white stuff smeared around his eyelids. The total effect is fairly sinister, like that of a snake with a malicious sunburn.

★ ★ ★

His first words to Mister Aloha — "Listen, the Boss is doing a little business" — then a nod in the direction of the umbrella-shaded table where Bruce and his manager, Mike Appel, are talking — "I wouldn't bother him right now . . . " — tend to support any sinister impressions. Mister Aloha transforms himself into one enormous obsequious grin. "Oh no, sir, nope, no-sir-ee, sir, you won't find me going over there and interrupting the mighty Mike Appel, former Marine, notoriously tactless and uncouth person and quick-tempered despiser of any lick-spittle scribes who should be so presumptuous as to enter his presence without proper certification and identification and authorization and registration, sir, no sir, not me, sir . . . " and the craven reporter does a veritable Stepin Fetchit tapdance over to the nearest chaise lounge. Leaning back with the relief of a Christian only recently delivered from some especially cranky lions, he exchanges benign pleasantries with Miami Steve and then hits him with a barrage of technical questions from some guitar magazine.

Miami Steve is hunched over a room service tray with a bowl of Sugar Frosted Flakes curdling rapidly in the early Arizona afternoon sun. He's telling Mister Aloha some fairly questionable stories of his musical past when Bruce walks over: "See, when I first met Bruce, he was playin' the guitar with the strings backwards. Yeah, he had 'em on the side facing his body. I told him, 'Look kid. You gotta put 'em the other way, so the audience can see 'em.' He says, 'Aw, what do they know?'"

Bruce is wearing a Speedo too, and a gold loop in his ear. He flops down and starts spreading oil over his body. He has the muscle tone of a former contender in the New Jersey Golden Gloves tournament, welterweight division. He wasn't, but he makes for a surprising contrast with most rock 'n' roller's pasty flab.

Saddhu looks up and offers the Boss some of his organic sesame seed cookie. The offer is refused, with a small shudder. "He don't want none of that," scoffs Miami Steve.

"If he did, he might get as healthy as me," Saddhu returns. He puffs his chest out, arms stiff at his sides, in an approximated imitation of a Muscle Beach bodybuilder. "Man, when the sun turns me this color, I'm a human . . . " His voice trails off as he searches for the right word.

Mister Aloha has it. "Dynamo?"

"Yeah, right, a human dynamo," and with that, he hurls himself into the pool. Mister Aloha and Miami Steve go back to their guitar interview, and Bruce shuts his eyes and lowers himself slowly back into the deck lounge. Miami Steve is telling all about his first amplifier — "It was a little thing, looked like a radio, sounded great. Turn that thing up and get all kinds of distortion! I wonder what I did with that thing . . . Hey Bruce! Didn't I give it to you, that little amp I used to have?"

"Never gave me no amp," Springsteen mutters from behind closed lids.

"Sure I did. That was right after I taught you everything you know about the guitar, as I was just explaining to this gentleman here."

Bruce leans forward, lets loose a snorting laugh, with lots of jaw action. They crank up and start talking about old times, reminiscing about one of Bruce's old bands, the one Miami Steve calls The Brucie Revue. "Man it was big, it had everything. Girl singers, horns, everything."

★ ★ ★

After that, Mister Aloha, Miami Steve and the Boss just lay out in the sun and gas about old bands and new records, with an occasional interruption when one or another falls into the pool for a few strokes. Mister Aloha shows Bruce a review stating that *Born to Run,* his recently released third record is a concept album, sort of a secret narrative, with homages to the great production styles of the Sixties. "Nah, it wasn't no concept album," Springsteen says, growing quieter. "I was just . . . " He pauses. "It wasn't no concept album." He reaches for an inflamed pimple nestled in the lower reaches of his chin whiskers, and touches it, fondles it. "See, when I write a song, I look at a theme, and then, maybe, I write another one, on the same theme, but a different side." He smoothes the hair away from the pimple. "If you're looking at the songs that way, I can see how you might think they make a story," he says cautiously, "but I didn't really mean it that way, ya know?"

"So that means the review was worthless," Mister Aloha asks.

"No," Bruce replies, hesitating. "I mean, I don't want to say you can't look at it that way. I mean, anyway you want to look at it, that's all right, I guess. It's just that I wasn't really trying to do that one certain thing with it." He stops ministering to his zit and begins rubbing more baby oil on his chest.

"What about 'Born to Run,' the Spector sound, I mean you did it so well, it really recreates the sound," Mister Aloha gushes.

"Well," comes the carefully-phrased response, "no one can really recreate that sound." Bruce and Miami Steve recently attended a Dion session being produced by Phil Spector during which the Master unleashed a few sarcasm-tipped barbs in the direction of the Apprentice. Bruce is deliberate and respectful when he says, "You can't really recreate that sound. The things he does are so . . . anyway, we got the sound we were looking for."

Saddhu has made his way out of the pool, perched upon one of the lounge

chairs, pulled some radio headphones over his ears, pointed their antennae toward the stratosphere and then, eyes closed, with a look of bliss beaming forth from his face, gone into a yogic spinal twist. Bruce is checking him out, the look on his own face mingling awe and amusement, when he sees Mike Appel coming. He shuts his eyes and leans back into his chair again.

★ ★ ★

Mike Appel is relatively large but he looks larger; square-shouldered, in his early-to-mid 30s, black hair layered into a Businessman's Trendy, he's notoriously brusque and outspoken. One business acquaintance says, "After arguing with him for months, I think he is beginning to respect me." He has been trying to convince Bruce to fly to Hollywood after his Phoenix concerts to meet film producer Dino De Laurentis and speak with him about a possible acting vehicle. As he comes close, Springsteen lifts boyish arms skyward and cries, "Hey, Mike! This is what you need. A little sun. You need to slow down for a while and catch some rays."

Appel stands over Bruce, his arms folded. "I'll slow down in January. I'll take a little time off then."

"Nah, Michael what you need is a little sun now. Maybe you should come to Miami with me and we'll . . . "

"What I need is for you to come to L.A. Maybe you should come to L.A. and then we'll get you right to Miami and then you can lay around in the sun all you want."

"I don't think I want to go to L.A., Michael," says the Boss.

Appel repeats it tonelessly. "Ya don't want to go to L.A." A pause. "Well, I think you should go over and talk to this guy. I think it would be a great thing."

Bruce reflects. "Who is the guy again? What pictures has he done?"

"His name is Dino De Laurentis, he did . . . awh, what's the name . . . ?"

Mister Aloha is ever-willing to be helpful. "He did *The Bible.*"

Miami Steve, suitably awe-stricken, turns to Bruce. "He did *The Bible?* Listen Boss, uh, maybe you better go see this guy, ya know? I mean there's no sense in getting him upset. Besides, maybe we can get a part in it for me. I'd be great as the Son of God."

The Boss is amused. "Hey, what could Kahuna be?" The band's name for saxman Clarence Clemons is the Big Kahuna. "Hey, I got it. He could be the Ark."

Appel gets in on the act. "Hey, I got the part for you," he growls, pointing at Miami Steve. "You could be Judas."

"Me!" howls the wounded guitarist, "I was gonna have 'em save that one for you." The words hang in the air too long.

Appel straps right back down to business. "I think you ought to go," he tells the Boss. "You leave tonight, get there tomorrow, and we'll have you in Miami on Saturday. Then you can lay out in the sun until Tuesday." His position is clear, Appel clears out. The Boss leans back once more, closing his eyes.

Nah, Bruce cuts in, I never read that much. . . except in high school where they made me. I listened to records – that's where I learned man.

When he opens them again, Don has appeared to dole out Miami Steve's salary. Bruce looks over to him, as he holds out the payroll book for Miami Steve's signature. "Hey, do you think I should go to California?"

Don looks over his shoulder for a moment, then says, "I think you should get on a plane for Miami tonight." He disappears.

Miami Steve invites Bruce to come along to Texas with him. Mister Aloha wonders what Miami Steve's up to in Texas. "He's going to spill, as it were, his vital fluids," says Saddhu.

"Nah, man," Bruce says, "I just want to lay out in Miami." He gets up and dives into the pool, swims a couple of laps, then returns. Mister Aloha, apparently not the most tactful person, carries right on with his interrogation. "Hey Bruce. What part did Jon Landau actually play in the new album's production?" Landau was brought in after Appel and Springsteen had spent months in the studio, producing only one single. "Did he show you what you were doing wrong in the studio or what?"

"Landau don't know nothing about the studio, man. He was just there to show us some shortcuts, ya know? Some ways of doing things that was easier. He don't know nothing about the studio, but he's a smart guy, Landau. Wasn't for him, the album still might not be out."

Next, the inquisitive Aloha wants to know if Bruce has some kind of explanation for his enormous popularity in Arizona. "Well, I dunno. I know the first time we came here, we did a great show, really hot. Then, the next time, we did two more, equally good. That's probably it." Ever since Bruce and Mister Aloha started talking irrelevancies, Miami Steve has been immersed in his Mafioso mystery book, but now he looks at his watch and lets them know it's time to get ready for the show.

The show that night is loose, the band sloppier than on either of the two preceding nights, but Bruce and the audience seem driven to entertain each other. Springsteen goes through his usual workout, losing roughly a gallon of sweat, demonstrating how he maintains his muscle tone. Every other guy in sight is wearing his slouch-hat Springsteen costume. ("Check their shoes," says Clarence Clemons, "That's how you know if they really got it together. They gotta have mismatched shoes.") Grady Gammage Auditorium's second tier rocks nine inches as the balcony crowd bops. Architect Frank Lloyd Wright does the graveyard spin, and the band comes back for encore after encore. At the backstage party, Springsteen is confronted by cluster upon cluster of competitive coeds (Clarence indulged a little extra Wednesday night and gave a backstage pass to anyone who showed a pretty smile), and the cake celebrating the end of the tour ends up everywhere.

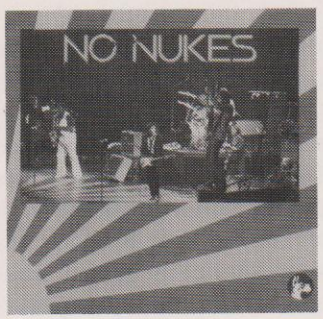
And when the party is over, the Boss boards a plane for Hollywood.

ON COLLECTING

By Jeff McDermott

For the benefit of our readers, *Backstreets* provides ratings of unauthorized releases currently in circulation. Don't write us asking where these can be obtained. *Backstreets* in no manner, shape or form endorses these recordings. These reviews are provided by our columnist solely for informational purposes. Despite these words of warning, some collectors will still seek this material out, and for those collectors, our reviews should help you steer clear of the real losers.

Unauthorized CDs are growing in numbers and with that growth, expect some real ripoffs — our word of advice is let the buyer beware, and demand to listen to material before you buy it. Each title here has been rated for packaging, performance and sound quality on a scale of one to ten, one being awful, and ten being quality generally found in legitimate releases.



•More No Nukes
(Great Dane Records)
Packaging: 8
Sound Quality: 8
Performance: 8

This 90 minute, 2-CD set covers the second night's show and adds "Rave On" from the first night. Also included in this set is a 20-page booklet of several decent photos. The booklet details the event for several pages, with the last few pages devoted to Great Dane advertising. Happily, only Bruce's set is presented here (unlike Great Dane's 3-CD Christic set), and since Elektra Records has indefinitely shelved the legitimate release of the *No Nukes* soundtrack on CD, *More No Nukes* fills a need, especially since the official *No Nukes* soundtrack album featured only the "Detroit Medley."

Debuted during the two shows was Bruce's new song "The River" in broad, and less stark rendition than the released version or later live performances.

The sound of the 2-CDs is excellent throughout, except for "Rave On," which is mediocre quality. Another sound problem occurs during "The Promised Land," when all audio levels on all instruments drop, except for the drums, for nearly two minutes (though this is a flaw in the original master recording, not specifically this pressing).

•Rockin' All Over the World
(Pluto Records)
Packaging: 5
Sound Quality: 4
Performance: 8

For a so-called "tenth anniversary" release this CD sure comes up short. Half the eight-page booklet included with this 78-minute CD is an order form for other CDs. Aside from the song list on the back, the booklet includes only two black and white photos. The sound quality is listenable audience, but audible pops and clicks suggest a vinyl source.

This CD was released by Great Dane's off-shoot label Pluto (indicated by the Great Dane dog logo turned head on). Of the fourteen songs offered here, Bruce is at his best on "Who'll Stop the Rain" and the title track. Bruce also does a good job on "Independence Day," but overall, this "tenth anniversary" CD is lackluster.

•S.O.S. Racisme!
(FTD/Great Dane)
Packaging: 5
Sound Quality: 8
Performance: 8

The latest bonus CD (included with the Italian fanzine *Follow That Dream*) contains Bruce's four-song acoustic set with Clarence televised on French television in 1988. Bruce and Clarence made a surprise appearance at this anti-racism concert during the European *Tunnel* tour. The nearly 18-minute disc features Bruce's "The Promised Land" and "My Hometown," and covers of "Bad Moon Rising" and "Blowin' in the Wind," played for the first time in concert by Bruce.

•Springsteen, Raitt and Browne
(Templar Records)
Packaging: 4
Sound Quality: 8
Performance:10

Maybe the most exciting Bruce CD release so far this year, Templar's triple CD features one disc for each of the three artist's sets at last year's Christic Institute benefit show, including Bruce's entire first night performance on one CD.

Unlike the 1986 Bridge show, where Bruce was backed by Danny and Nils, this time Bruce plays solo on guitar and piano. During the 17 song set, Bruce played several new songs, such as "57 Channels," "The Real World" and "Red Headed Woman," in addition to wildly different arrangements of older songs, including "Darkness on the Edge of Town." Throughout, Bruce's guitar playing is at its most bluesy.

Although taken from a crystal clear audience recording, this set has no packaging except a hazey color cover photo. A 2-CD set of both of Bruce's performances would have been more desirable to most fans, though the Raitt and Browne sets are enjoyable.

(Note that the *Greetings From California EP* reviewed last issue excerpts the second Christic Institute show in largely identical quality.)

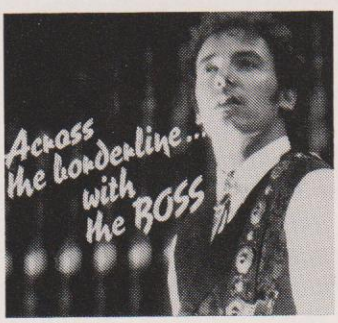
•Murder Incorporated
(Flamingo Records)
Packaging: 8
Sound Quality: 6
Performance: 10

One the most eagerly anticipated titles in some time, *Murder Incorporated: The Lost Masterpiece* deserves a mixed review. The packaging is not the problem, with four *BIUSA*-themed photos, plus lyrics to all the unreleased tracks on the disc.

And of course, it's not the outstanding unreleased songs *Murder Incorporated* includes: *Born in the USA* outtakes "(Drop on Down and) Cover Me," "Sugarland," "My Love Will Not Let You Down," "Frankie," "This Hard Land," two versions of the title track, and more. All fourteen tracks ("I'm Goin' Down" listed on the cover, isn't on the disc) are worthwhile. The problem is the sound quality.

It isn't that the sound quality is low, it's very listenable, but these outtakes are not on the quality level of outtakes found on other discs such as *Born in the Studio* or *River Outtakes*.

But the material here (making its first appearance on CD), is great, and though flawed, *Murder Incorporated* does the best it can with an imperfect source.



•Across the Borderline
(Eagle Records)
Packaging: 5
Sound Quality: 6
Performance: 8

The first complete *Tunnel of Love* tour show arrives on the 3-CD *Across the Borderline*, recorded in Los Angeles, April 27, 1988.

The audience recording is mostly good, if a little weird sounding, and the show was one of the best on the US *Tunnel* tour. The obvious highlights here are the amazing cover of "Across the Borderline" and the great encore of "Have Love, Will Travel" into "Tenth Avenue Freeze-out" played at only a few shows.

Packaging is nothing special, made primarily of live color shots from the '88 European tour, but overall, *Across the Borderline* is a decent piece.

ON DISC

Bruce records Chicken Lips

For Our Children released

The first new music of 1991 from Bruce Springsteen arrived as a two minute children's song on the charity release *For Our Children*. "Chicken Lips and Lizard Hips" was just one of the highlights on Walt Disney Records' benefit for the Pediatric AIDS Foundation that also included children's tunes by Paul McCartney, Little Richard, Bob Dylan and many others.

Bruce's performance of "Chicken Lips" probably reminds most fans of the rollicking acoustic sound of his earlier B-side "The Big Payback," both in its style and brief length. But it is also not difficult to detect a change in Bruce's singing style, since for the first time, he could be singing such a song to his own son.

In fact, according to a story in *Pulse* Magazine, Springsteen found the tune in his son Evan's nursery in a cassette and book set called *Kid Songs: A Holler-along Handbook*. That set was written by Nancy and John Cassidy from Palo Alto, California. Remarkably, it's the only tune John Cassidy has ever written.

Cassidy described to *Pulse* how he was notified of Springsteen's interest in "Chicken Lips": "I got a call from some guy saying he's working for Disney on an AIDS project. I thought, 'Great, but why is he calling me?' He wanted to know if he could get a gratis license to record 'Chicken Lips.' I said, 'Yeah, sure. Who wants to do it?' When he said 'Bruce Springsteen,' my first response was that the receptionist let a crank call through."

Cassidy believes that the song's anti-authoritarian stance is what attracted Bruce to the tune, a theory most Bruce fans are sure to agree with. Its lyrics are particularly poignant for anyone whose mother forced them to eat foods they didn't like.

"Chicken Lips" was not Springsteen's first choice for contribution however. According to *USA Today*, Springsteen had recorded a version of "Pony Boy" (rumored to be a duet with Patti Scialfa), but yanked it late in the game in favor of "Chicken Lips." Despite its all-star line-up, *For Our Children* proved to be only a modest hit, perhaps because of the lack of hit single support. Little Richard's version of "Itsy Bitsy Spider" was issued as the video single to promote the record, but it didn't generate much airplay. It's easy to believe a stronger single choice might have been the Springsteen or Sting cuts, but then again, it is difficult to imagine hearing "Chicken Lips" next to "U Can't Touch This" on the radio.

Springsteen recorded the song this past spring at the now closed Record Plant studio in Los Angeles. The studio had been used by Springsteen in the past, most notably for the mixing of *The River*, and "Chicken Lips" was one of the last recordings to take place at the fabled studio.

For Our Children was issued on CD and cassette in the US, but has yet to be issued in England or Europe, making it highly sought after by overseas Bruce fans.

Two Springsteen related releases long awaited on CD arrived in August. Little Steven's second album *Voice of America* and Gary US Bonds' *Dedication* were released by Razor and Tie Records for the first time anywhere in the world on CD.

Steven's *Voice of America* follows Razor and Tie's successful release of *Men Without Women*. This time out, the CD contains the full album and two bonus tracks: an instrumental cover of Duke Ellington's "Caravan" and the outstanding non-LP single "Vote (That Mutha Out)," a political bombshell single issued in Europe in 1984. "Vote" makes its first CD appearance in America. Packaging for *Voice of America* is also an improvement over *Men Without Women*, highlighted by the inclusion of newly penned liner notes by Steven himself.

Bruce's "Chicken Lips and Lizard Hips" highlights For Our Children.

His notes are both insightful and hilarious. He describes his solo career as "an eccentric adventure of self-expression and self-destruction." *Voice of America* itself was an attempt to "look at political situations and turn them into songs." Steven reveals his goal was (and is) a five album solo career evolving from rootsy rock to world music, if he "ever gets around to it."

Dedication also includes new liner notes written by Bonds, and Razor and Tie has announced it will follow the release of *Dedication* with the late fall issue of *On the Line*, Bonds' excellent second album, also produced by Springsteen and Miami Steve. (All of Razor and Tie's CDs are available through Backstreet Records.)

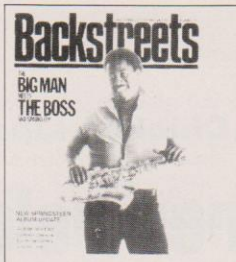
Bonds' notes are simple and heartfelt reflections on what must have been a wonderful period in his life. "Recording this album was a blast," writes Bonds. "We had only four weeks to get it done so things were spontaneous — just the way I like them."

Finally, though Bruce's next record is only hoped for by year's end, Southside Johnny new album *Better Days* should reach stores by mid-October. A single is slated for release just after Labor Day, to coincide with Johnny's annual appearance at the Garden State Arts Center on September 3rd.

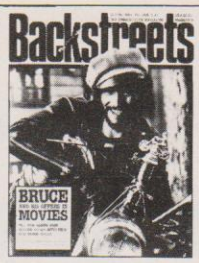
As for other E Streeters, Rykodisc continues promoting Nils' album and Clarence Clemons' next solo effort is reportedly near completion.

One final note for the hardcore Bruce CD collector, a four CD promo radio special titled *The All American Jam* includes the only CD appearance of the live version of "Born in the USA" from the Stockholm radio broadcast in 1988, unavailable on CD officially anywhere. This syndicated special has begun to show up in collector's magazines, at the expected high prices. Sound quality is fabulous, far better than any boot.

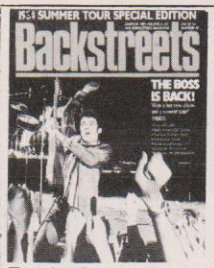
back issues



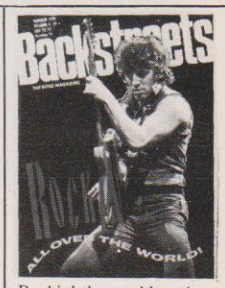
Clarence feature; German discography; new import singles. **#8 $5**



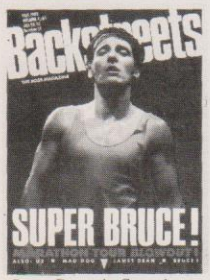
Bruce in the movies; Beaver Brown int.; Boss book reviews. **#9 $5**



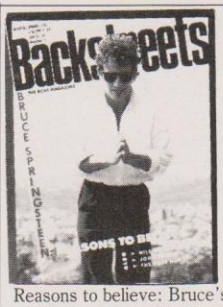
Tour '84 Special: Born in the USA review; Bruce in Japan discography; Bruce's car. **#10 $5**



Rockin' the world — the Boss Club; tour update; REM int. **#14 $5**



SuperBruce!: Complete tour report; Sun City int.; Bruce's guitars; Mad Dog int.; U2. **#15 $5**



Reasons to believe: Bruce's political message; The Boss body; Nils Lofgren int.; Fogerty. **#16 $5**

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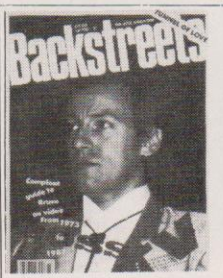
King of Clubs: 20 year history of Shore music; Bruce and Bon Jovi; Steve int.; Landau int.; studio sessions; Thunder Road. **#21 $5**



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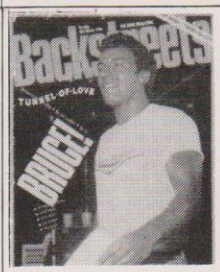

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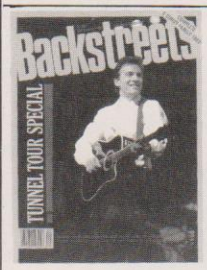

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

I realize that he wants to be cautious and put out the best album that he possibly can, but I think Erik's point was a good one — he also needs to take some risks. The most frustrating part, as Erik said, is that the material exists, but we can't hear it.

I'll be there when the next record comes out, but I think a lot of fans, both old-timers and newcomers, won't be. They're looking for a reason to believe.

Macreena Doyle
Canton, NY

PHANTOMS

Dear Editor:

Many thanks for your Bruce Springsteen, "The Bootleg Series" article in the latest issue of *Backstreets*. Let's hope Bruce picks up the new Dylan set, listens to "Moonshiner," "Call Letter Blues," "Blind Willie McTell," and all the other superb tunes, and concludes that it's time to release "The Promise," "Restless Nights," "This Hard Land," etc. to the general CD/cassette buying public. I personally hate having to obtain these songs via illegal means; I'd rather reward Bruce with a little of my hard-earned cash (and a lot joy and gratitude) for releasing them legitimately. But the excellence of the music and power of the performances override any concerns I have about legality.

I've been a faithful *Backstreets* reader, though not a subscriber, since 1983. I think you folks do a terrific job, although I've never been much interested in the "Bruce Tramp" ethos. (I do identify with, and to a great extent share, I think, Bruce's social/ethical/political outlook, at least as expressed implicitly in his songs and more explicitly in interviews.) It's a shame Springsteen and Jon Landau (and Nils Lofgren) seem to think you're a bunch of half-crazed obsessive types with nothing better to do than masticate on the minutiae of Bruce's personal life. They apparently haven't looked at *Backstreets* too closely, or maybe the problem is exactly that they are looking too closely, without perspective. Keep up the good work.

David Kieltyka
Redford, MI

MANSION ON THE HILL

Dear Editor:

I grew up in Jersey and in a family situation probably similar to Springsteen's (as much as I know of his family life) and I think I know where the man is coming from, but I am confused. When Springsteen toured with Amnesty in Africa he said in a news conference (paraphrasing here): that in America we have our own economic apartheid that a black man walking down a white neighborhood street will "inevitably be stopped." Well, I agree with Springsteen on that statement, however I am perplexed.

Isn't this the guy who lives in Beverly Hills? Probably one of the most segregated towns in this nation. Bruce you disappoint me. A tad bit hypocritical I think. It isn't that I am one of those few Jersey people who are disappointed that Bruce left our little nestbed state, to live on the west coast, it is that so many celebrities, politicians and people in general, make statements and do not live up to them. I am a little bit tired of Hollywood politics.

It's easy to make political statements, but what do you do to correct the situation? Move to the hills and surround yourself with high fences. Gee, I think in Beverly Hills a black man or anyone who doesn't look the type will inevitably be stopped.

Mary E. Fox
Washington, DC

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THE BACKSTREETS COLLECTION 1-9

The first nine issues of Backstreets are completely sold-out, and valued at over $200. But don't worry, you can get a reprint of the first nine issues of Backstreets, including the impossible to find issue number one. Over 100 pages of great Bruce information, all in one volume. This item was printed for distribution with the Backstreets book, and we're now offering our remaining supply for only $12 each plus $3 shipping ($5 shipping per copy overseas). Send check, money order or credit card info to:

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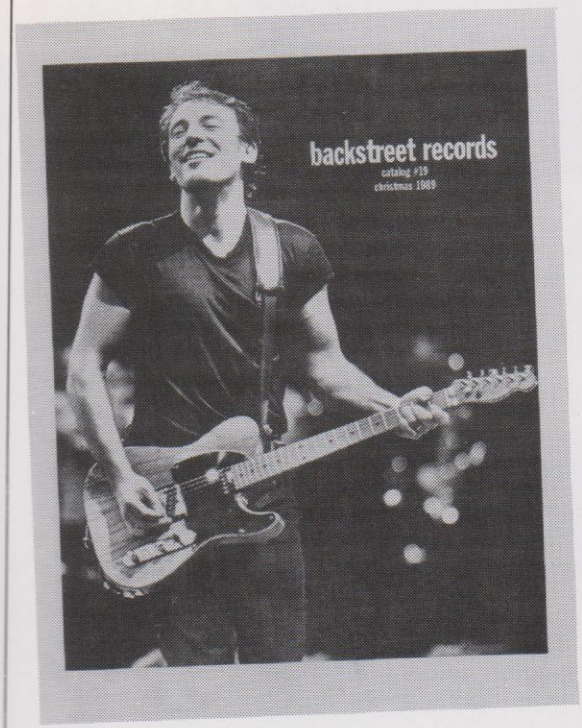

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Backstreet Records is your source for Bruce collectibles of every kind, from T-shirts to rare picture sleeves. Our catalog is published five times a year, and each issue is chock full of the best in Springsteen rarities. We've got all the posters, all the B-sides and an ever-growing collection of CDs as well. When you buy from Backstreet Records, you know you're getting only 100% official and authorized collectibles from all over the globe.

We pride ourselves on our service at Backstreet Records, because we're collectors ourselves and we know how collectors should be treated. We're always happy to search for your wants and answer any questions you might have about any Springsteen item. Everything we sell is backed up by a no questions asked, money back guarantee. As our customers can attest to, we offer prompt, courteous service to the US, Canada and overseas.

Besides mail order, Backstreet Records can be reached by phone of FAX for immediate orders. Our phones are answered from 10-5 Pacific time at (206) 728-7603 and our FAX line is always open at (206) 728-8827.

If you're a collector of Bruce Springsteen or related artists, this is the store and the catalog for you. To get on our mailing list, all you need to do is send $5 in the US and Canada (or $8 for airmail overseas) and we'll put you on for a year. You'll get five catalogs over the course of a year, including our annual Warehouse Clearance catalog which is packed with one-of-a-kind magazines, singles and LPS.

To get on the catalog list for one year, send a check, money order or your credit card information to Catalog Requests, Backstreet Records, PO Box 51219, Seattle, WA 98115. If you'd like to receive the current catalog, send $1 in the US ($2 overseas) to the same address and we'll rush you our latest catalog. We guarantee that you'll find our service first-rate and that our staff is ready to help you in any way they can.

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Backstreets is seeking the support of a few of our subscribers to become supporting members. It's not for everybody, but for those serious fanatics who make the Boss part of their daily life, we think it's just the answer to your Boss fix.

Many of our subscribers have asked for years if they could get the magazine first-class and in protective envelopes and they have offered to pay extra for these services. Because of the way magazines are produced, these services are very expensive and take lots of raw labor to process. But as part of our SuperSub program we're offering supporting subscribers these services and more. Adding up all the services we're offering one gets more than three times the cost of service. Because of the cost of international mail, the SuperSub can only be offered in the US.

A SuperSub entitles one to:

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- **Exclusive Collectors-only Staff T-shirt.** Our SuperSubs will be supporting members of the magazine and as such we've printed up an absolutely gorgeous t-shirt exclusively for them that says "Backstreets Staff." This beautiful t-shirt will not be made available to the general public and will only be given to SuperSub members.
- **Automatic Personalized Xmas Cards.** Each year we'll ship these to show our thanks to you, along with a special "gift" each year.
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- **Boss Hotline Use.** SuperSubs will get 24-hour access to all the latest breaking Boss news on their private hotline — not the same number given out to regular Backstreets subscribers. This service alone is worth its weight in gold.

The price for all these services is $50 a year. That's a lot of money but we think the services more than make up for the cost.

This is obviously not for everyone (of course, regular subscriptions are still available), but we think this service is tailor-made for the serious Bossaholic and will more than pay for itself in convenience and service. We can't transfer any current subscriber over to a SuperSub easily so there is no conversion but what we can do is, if you sign up for SuperSub, we can turn the rest of your present normal subscription into a gift for anyone you ask (and send them a personalized card letting them know).

To sign up for a SuperSub, send your check, money order or credit card info, along with your name, address and phone number and your t-shirt size (M, L or XL) and we'll start you off ASAP by sending your "staff" shirt, the SuperSub packet and the unlisted phone number to the Boss Hotline.

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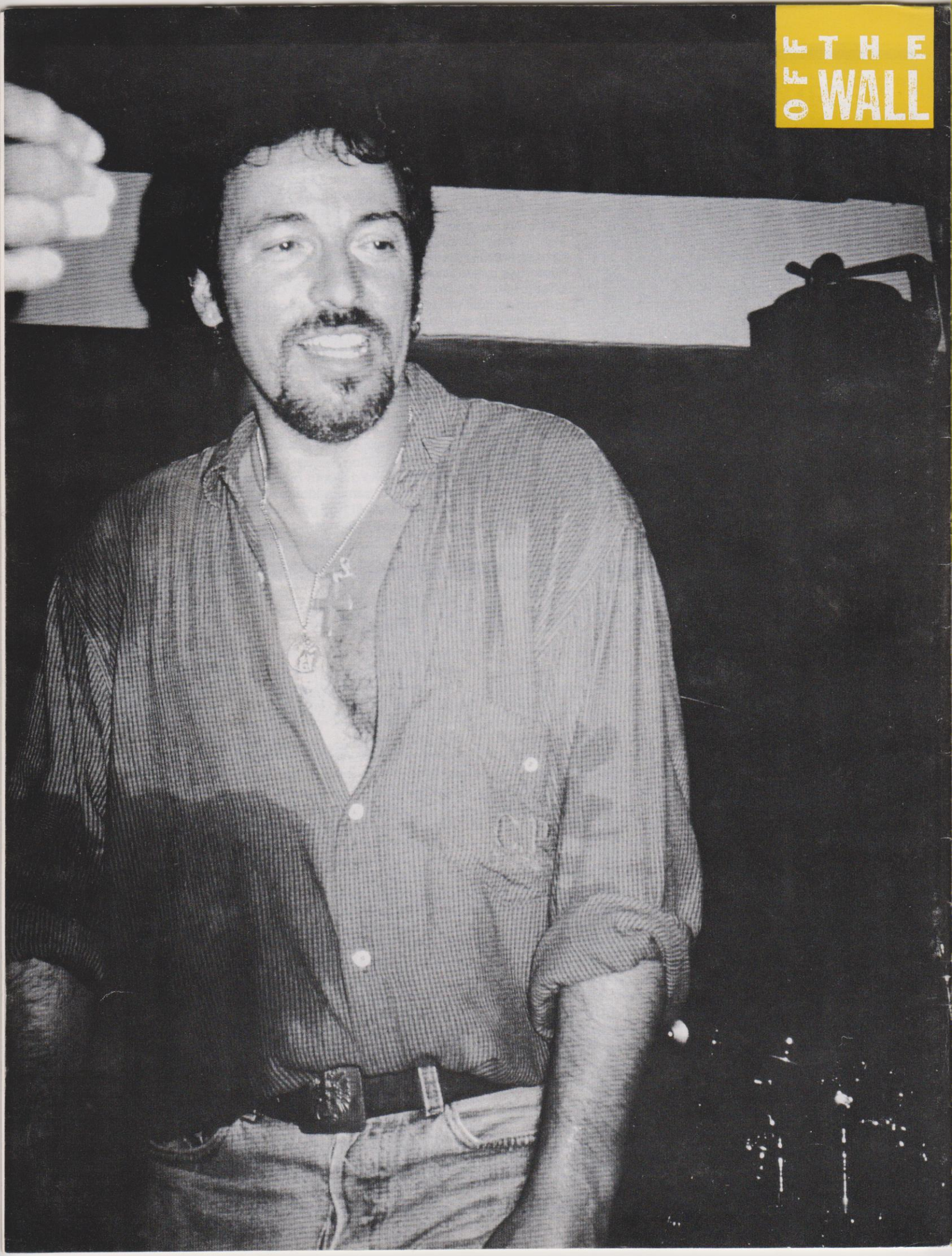
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